

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

N<sup>o</sup>. 184.]

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1862.

[PRICE 2d.]

## NO NAME.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c.

### THE FIFTH SCENE.

BALIOL COTTAGE, DUMFRIES.

#### CHAPTER I.

TOWARDS eleven o'clock, on the morning of the third of November, the breakfast-table at Baliol Cottage presented that essentially comfortless appearance which is caused by a meal in a state of transition—that is to say, by a meal prepared for two persons, which has been already partaken of by one, and which has not yet been approached by the other. It must be a hardy appetite which can contemplate without a momentary discouragement, the battered egg-shell, the fish half-stripped to a skeleton, the crumbs in the plate, and the dregs in the cup. There is surely a wise submission to those weaknesses in human nature which must be respected and not reproved, in the sympathising rapidity with which servants in places of public refreshment clear away all signs of the customer in the past, from the eyes of the customer in the present. Although his predecessor may have been the wife of his bosom or the child of his loins, no man can find himself confronted at table by the traces of a vanished eater, without a passing sense of injury in connexion with the idea of his own meal.

Some such impression as this found its way into the mind of Mr. Noel Vanstone, when he entered the lonely breakfast-parlour at Baliol Cottage, shortly after eleven o'clock. He looked at the table with a frown, and rang the bell with an expression of disgust.

"Clear away this mess," he said, when the servant appeared. "Has your mistress gone?"

"Yes, sir—nearly an hour ago."

"Is Louisa down stairs?"

"Yes, sir."

"When you have put the table right, send Louisa up to me."

He walked away to the window. The momentary irritation passed from his face; but it left an expression there which remained—an expression of pining discontent. Personally, his marriage had altered him for the worse. His wizen little cheeks were beginning to shrink into hollows; his frail little figure had already con-

tracted a slight stoop. The former delicacy of his complexion had gone—the sickly paleness of it was all that remained. His thin flaxen moustachios were no longer pragmatically waxed and twisted into a curl: their weak feathery ends hung meekly pendent over the querulous corners of his mouth. If the ten or twelve weeks since his marriage, had been counted by his looks, they might have reckoned as ten or twelve years. He stood at the window mechanically picking leaves from a pot of heath placed in front of it, and drearily humming the forlorn fragment of a tune.

The prospect from the window overlooked the course of the Nith, at a bend of the river a few miles above Dumfries. Here and there, through wintry gaps in the wooded bank, broad tracts of the level cultivated valley met the eye. Boats passed on the river, and carts plodded along the high road on their way to Dumfries. The sky was clear; the November sun shone as pleasantly as if the year had been younger by two good months; and the view, noted in Scotland for its bright and peaceful charm, was presented at the best which its wintry aspect could assume. If it had been hidden in mist or drenched with rain, Mr. Noel Vanstone would, to all appearance, have found it as attractive as he found it now. He waited at the window until he heard Louisa's knock at the door—then turned back sullenly to the breakfast-table and told her to come in.

"Make the tea," he said. "I know nothing about it. I'm left here neglected. Nobody helps me."

The discreet Louisa silently and submissively obeyed.

"Did your mistress leave any message for me," he asked, "before she went away?"

"No message in particular, sir. My mistress only said she should be too late, if she waited breakfast any longer."

"Did she say nothing else?"

"She told me at the carriage-door, sir, that she would most likely be back by the end of the week."

"Was she in good spirits at the carriage-door?"

"No, sir. I thought my mistress seemed very anxious and uneasy. Is there anything more I can do, sir?"

"I don't know. Wait a minute."

He proceeded discontentedly with his breakfast. Louisa waited resignedly at the door.

"I think your mistress has been in bad spirits, lately," he resumed, with a sudden outbreak of petulance.

"My mistress has not been very cheerful, sir."

"What do you mean by not very cheerful? Do you mean to prevaricate? Am I nobody in the house? Am I to be kept in the dark about everything? Is your mistress to go away on her own affairs, and leave me at home like a child—and am I not even to ask a question about her? Am I to be prevaricated with by a servant? I won't be prevaricated with! Not very cheerful? What do you mean by not very cheerful?"

"I only meant that my mistress was not in good spirits, sir."

"Why couldn't you say it then? Don't you know the value of words? The most dreadful consequences sometimes happen from not knowing the value of words. Did your mistress tell you she was going to London?"

"Yes, sir."

"What did you think when your mistress told you she was going to London? Did you think it odd she was going without me?"

"I did not presume to think it odd, sir.—Is there anything more I can do for you, if you please, sir?"

"What sort of a morning is it out? Is it warm? Is the sun on the garden?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you seen the sun yourself on the garden?"

"Yes, sir."

"Get me my great-coat; I'll take a little turn. Has the man brushed it? Did you see the man brush it yourself? What do you mean by saying he has brushed it, when you didn't see him? Let me look at the tails. If there's a speck of dust on the tails, I'll turn the man off!—Help me on with it."

Louisa helped him on with his coat, and gave him his hat. He went out irritably. The coat was a large one (it had belonged to his father); the hat was a large one (it was a misfit, purchased at a bargain by himself). He was submerged in his hat and coat; he looked singularly small, and frail, and miserable, as he slowly wended his way, in the wintry sunlight, down the garden walk. The path sloped gently from the back of the house to the water-side, from which it was parted by a low wooden fence. After pacing backwards and forwards slowly for some little time, he stopped at the lower extremity of the garden; and leaning on the fence, looked down listlessly at the smooth flow of the river.

His thoughts still ran on the subject of his first fretful question to Louisa—he was still brooding over the circumstances under which his wife had left the cottage that morning, and over the want of consideration towards himself, implied in the manner of her departure. The longer he thought

of his grievance, the more acutely he resented it. He was capable of great tenderness of feeling where any injury to his sense of his own importance was concerned. His head drooped little by little on his arms, as they rested on the fence; and, in the deep sincerity of his mortification, he sighed bitterly.

The sigh was answered by a voice close at his side.

"You were happier with *me*, sir," said the voice, in accents of tender regret.

He looked up with a scream—literally with a scream—and confronted Mrs. Lecount.

Was it the spectre of the woman? or the woman herself? Her hair was white; her face had fallen away; her eyes looked out large, bright, and haggard over her hollow cheeks. She was withered and old. Her dress hung loose round her wasted figure; not a trace of its buxom autumnal beauty remained. The quietly impenetrable resolution, the smoothly insinuating voice—these were the only relics of the past which sickness and suffering had left in Mrs. Lecount.

"Compose yourself, Mr. Noel," she said, gently. "You have no cause to be alarmed at seeing me. Your servant, when I inquired, said you were in the garden; and I came here to find you. I have traced you out, sir, with no resentment against yourself, with no wish to distress you by so much as the shadow of a reproach. I come here, on what has been, and is still, the business of my life—your service."

He recovered himself a little; but he was still incapable of speech. He held fast by the fence, and stared at her.

"Try to possess your mind, sir, of what I say," proceeded Mrs. Lecount. "I have not come here as your enemy, but as your friend. I have been tried by sickness; I have been tried by distress. Nothing remains of me, but my heart. My heart forgives you; my heart, in your sore need—need which you have yet to feel—places me at your service. Take my arm, Mr. Noel. A little turn in the sun will help you to recover yourself."

She put his hand through her arm, and marched him slowly up the garden-walk. Before she had been five minutes in his company, she had resumed full possession of him, in her own right.

"Now down again, Mr. Noel," she said. "Gently down again, in this fine sunlight. I have much to say to you, sir, which you never expected to hear from me. Let me ask a little domestic question first. They told me, at the house door, Mrs. Noel Vanstone was gone away on a journey. Has she gone for long?"

Her master's hand trembled on her arm as he put that question. Instead of answering it, he tried faintly to plead for himself. The first words that escaped him were prompted by his first returning sense—the sense that his house-keeper had taken him into custody. He tried to make his peace with Mrs. Lecount.

"I always meant to do something for you," he said, coaxingly. "You would have heard from me, before long. Upon my word and honour, Lecount, you would have heard from me, before long!"

"I don't doubt it, sir," replied Mrs. Lecount. "But for the present, never mind about Me. You, and your interests, first."

"How did you come here?" he asked, looking at her in astonishment. "How came you to find me out?"

"It is a long story, sir; I will tell it you some other time. Let it be enough to say now, that I *have* found you. Will Mrs. Noel be back again at the house to-day? A little louder, sir; I can hardly hear you. So! so! Not back again till the end of the week! And where is she gone? To London, did you say? And what for?—I am not inquisitive, Mr. Noel; I am asking serious questions, under serious necessity. Why has your wife left you here, and gone to London by herself?"

They were down at the fence again as she made that last inquiry; and they waited, leaning against it, while Noel Vanstone answered. Her reiterated assurances that she bore him no malice were producing their effect on him; he was beginning to recover himself. The old helpless habit of addressing all his complaints to his housekeeper, was returning already with the re-appearance of Mrs. Lecount—returning insidiously, in company with that besetting anxiety to talk about his grievances, which had got the better of him at the breakfast-table, and which had shown the wound inflicted on his vanity to his wife's maid.

"I can't answer for Mrs. Noel Vanstone," he said, spitefully. "Mrs. Noel Vanstone has not treated me with the consideration which is my due. She has taken my permission for granted; and she has only thought proper to tell me that the object of her journey is to see her friends in London. She went away this morning, without bidding me good-by. She takes her own way, as if I was nobody; she treats me like a child. You may not believe it, Lecount—but I don't even know who her friends are. I am left quite in the dark—I am left to guess for myself that her friends in London are her uncle and aunt."

Mrs. Lecount privately considered the question by the help of her own knowledge, obtained in London. She soon reached the obvious conclusion. After writing to her sister in the first instance, Magdalen had now, in all probability, followed the letter in person. There was little doubt that the friends she had gone to visit in London, were her sister and Miss Garth.

"Not her uncle and aunt, sir," resumed Mrs. Lecount, composedly. "A secret for your private ear! She has no uncle and aunt. Another little turn before I explain myself—another little turn to compose your spirits."

She took him in custody once more; and marched him back towards the house.

"Mr. Noel!" she said, suddenly stopping in the middle of the walk. "Do you know what was the worst mischief you ever did yourself in your life? I will tell you. That worst mischief was sending me to Zurich."

His hand began to tremble on her arm once more.

"I didn't do it!" he cried, piteously. "It was all Mr. Bygrave."

"You acknowledge, sir, that Mr. Bygrave deceived *me*?" proceeded Mrs. Lecount. "I am glad to hear that. You will be all the readier to make the next discovery which is waiting for you—the discovery that Mr. Bygrave has deceived *you*. He is not here to slip through my fingers now; and I am not the helpless woman in this place that I was at Aldborough. Thank God!"

She uttered that devout exclamation through her set teeth. All her hatred of Captain Wragge hissed out of her lips in those two words.

"Oblige me, sir, by holding one side of my travelling-bag," she resumed, "while I open it, and take something out."

The interior of the bag disclosed a series of neatly-folded papers, all laid together in order, and numbered outside. Mrs. Lecount took out one of the papers, and shut up the bag again with a loud snap of the spring that closed it.

"At Aldborough, Mr. Noel, I had only my own opinion to support me," she remarked. "My own opinion was nothing against Miss Bygrave's youth and beauty, and Mr. Bygrave's ready wit. I could only hope to attack your infatuation with proofs—and at that time I had not got them. I have got them now! I am armed at all points with proofs—I bristle from head to foot with proofs—I break my forced silence, and speak with the emphasis of my proofs. Do you know this writing, sir?"

He shrank back from the paper which she offered to him.

"I don't understand this," he said, nervously. "I don't know what you want, or what you mean."

Mrs. Lecount forced the paper into his hand. "You shall know what I mean, sir, if you will give me a moment's attention," she said. "On the day after you went away to St. Crux, I obtained admission to Mr. Bygrave's house, and I had some talk in private with Mr. Bygrave's wife. That talk supplied me with the means to convince you which I had wanted to find for weeks and weeks past. I wrote you a letter to say so—I wrote to tell you, that I would forfeit my place in your service, and my expectations from your generosity, if I did not prove to you when I came back from Switzerland, that my own private suspicion of Miss Bygrave was the truth. I directed that letter to you at St. Crux, and I posted it myself. Now, Mr. Noel, read the paper which I have forced into your hand. It is Admiral Bartram's written affirmation, that my letter came to St. Crux, and that he enclosed it to you, under cover to Mr. Bygrave, at your

own request. Did Mr. Bygrave ever give you that letter? Don't agitate yourself, sir! One word of reply will do—Yes? or No?"

He read the paper, and looked up at her with growing bewilderment and fear. She obstinately waited until he spoke. "No," he said, faintly; "I never got the letter."

"First proof!" said Mrs. Lecount taking the paper from him, and putting it back in the bag. "One more, with your kind permission, before we come to things more serious still. I gave you a written description, sir, at Aldborough, of a person not named; and I asked you to compare it with Miss Bygrave, the next time you were in her company. After having first shown the description to Mr. Bygrave—it is useless to deny it now, Mr. Noel; your friend at North Shingles is not here to help you!—after having first shown my note to Mr. Bygrave, you made the comparison; and you found it fail in the most important particular. There were two little moles placed close together on the left side of the neck, in my description of the unknown lady, and there were no little moles at all when you looked at Miss Bygrave's neck. I am old enough to be your mother, Mr. Noel. If the question is not indelicate—may I ask what the present state of your knowledge is, on the subject of your wife's neck?"

She looked at him with a merciless steadiness. He drew back a few steps, cowering under her eye. "I can't say," he stammered; "I don't know. What do you mean by these questions? I never thought about the moles afterwards; I never looked. She wears her hair low——"

"She has excellent reason to wear it low, sir," remarked Mrs. Lecount. "We will try and lift that hair, before we have done with the subject. When I came out here to find you in the garden, I saw a neat young person, through the kitchen window, with her work in her hand, who looked to my eyes like a lady's-maid. Is this young person your wife's maid? I beg your pardon, sir, did you say yes? In that case, another question, if you please. Did you engage her, or did your wife?"

"I engaged her——"

"While I was away? While I was in total ignorance that you meant to have a wife, or a wife's maid?"

"Yes."

"Under those circumstances, Mr. Noel, you cannot possibly suspect me of conspiring to deceive you, with the maid for my instrument. Go into the house, sir, while I wait here. Ask the woman who dresses Mrs. Noel Vanstone's hair, morning and night, whether her mistress has a mark on the left side of her neck, and (if so) what that mark is?"

He walked a few steps towards the house, without uttering a word—then stopped, and looked back at Mrs. Lecount. His blinking eyes were steady, and his wizen face had become suddenly composed. Mrs. Lecount advanced a little and joined him. She saw the change; but,

with all her experience of him, she failed to interpret the true meaning of it.

"Are you in want of a pretence, sir?" she asked. "Are you at a loss to account to your wife's maid for such a question as I wish you to put to her? Pretences are easily found, which will do for persons in her station of life. Say I have come here, with news of a legacy for Mrs. Noel Vanstone, and that there is a question of her identity to settle, before she can receive the money."

She pointed to the house. He paid no attention to the sign. His face grew paler and paler. Without moving or speaking, he stood and looked at her.

"Are you afraid?" asked Mrs. Lecount.

Those words roused him; those words lit a spark of the fire of manhood in him, at last. He turned on her, like a sheep on a dog.

"I won't be questioned and ordered!" he broke out, trembling violently under the new sensation of his own courage. "I won't be threatened and mystified any longer! How did you find me out at this place? What do you mean by coming here with your hints and your mysteries? What have you got to say against my wife?"

Mrs. Lecount composedly opened the travelling-bag, and took out her smelling-bottle, in case of emergency.

"You have spoken to me in plain words," she said. "In plain words, sir, you shall have your answer. Are you too angry to listen?"

Her looks and tones alarmed him, in spite of himself. His courage began to sink again; and, desperately as he tried to steady it, his voice trembled when he answered her.

"Give me my answer," he said, "and give it at once."

"Your commands shall be obeyed, sir, to the letter," replied Mrs. Lecount. "I have come here with two objects. To open your eyes to your own situation; and to save your fortune—perhaps your life. Your situation is this. Miss Bygrave has married you, under a false character and a false name. Can you rouse your memory? Can you call to mind the disguised woman who threatened you in Vauxhall Walk? That woman—as certainly as I stand here—is now your wife."

He looked at her in breathless silence. His lips falling apart; his eyes fixed in vacant inquiry. The suddenness of the disclosure had overreached its own end. It had stupefied him.

"My wife?" he repeated—and burst into an imbecile laugh.

"Your wife," reiterated Mrs. Lecount.

At the repetition of those two words, the strain on his faculties relaxed. A thought dawned on him for the first time. His eyes fixed on her with a furtive alarm, and he drew back hastily. "Mad!" he said to himself, with a sudden remembrance of what his friend Mr. Bygrave had told him at Aldborough; sharpened by his own sense of the haggard change that he saw in her face.

He spoke in a whisper—but Mrs. Lecount heard him. She was close at his side again, in an instant. For the first time, her self-possession failed her; and she caught him angrily by the arm.

"Will you put my madness to the proof, sir?" she asked.

He shook off her hold; he began to gather courage again, in the intense sincerity of his disbelief—courage to face the assertion which she persisted in forcing on him.

"Yes," he answered. "What must I do?"

"Do what I told you," said Mrs. Lecount. "Ask the maid that question about her mistress, on the spot. And, if she tells you the mark is there, do one thing more. Take me up into your wife's room, and open her wardrobe in my presence, with your own hands."

"What do you want with her wardrobe?" he asked.

"You shall know when you open it."

"Very strange!" he said to himself, vacantly. "It's like a scene in a novel—it's like nothing in real life."

He went slowly into the house; and Mrs. Lecount waited for him in the garden.

After an absence of a few minutes only, he appeared again, on the top of the flight of steps which led into the garden from the house. He held by the iron rail, with one hand; while with the other he beckoned to Mrs. Lecount to join him on the steps.

"What does the maid say?" she asked as she approached him. "Is the mark there?"

He answered in a whisper, "Yes." What he had heard from the maid had produced a marked change in him. The horror of the coming discovery had laid its paralysing hold on his mind. He moved mechanically; he looked and spoke like a man in a dream.

"Will you take my arm, sir?"

He shook his head; and, preceding her along the passage and up the stairs, led the way into his wife's room. When she joined him, and locked the door, he stood passively waiting for his directions, without making any remark, without showing any external appearance of surprise. He had not removed either his hat or coat. Mrs. Lecount took them off for him. "Thank you," he said, with the docility of a well-trained child. "It's like a scene in a novel—it's like nothing in real life."

The bed-chamber was not very large, and the furniture was heavy and old-fashioned. But evidences of Magdalen's natural taste and refinement were visible everywhere, in the little embellishments that graced and enlivened the aspect of the room. The perfume of dried rose-leaves hung fragrant on the cool air. Mrs. Lecount sniffed the perfume with a disparaging frown, and threw the window up to its full height. "Pah!" she said, with a shudder of virtuous disgust—"the atmosphere of deceit!"

She seated herself near the window. The wardrobe stood against the wall opposite, and

the bed was at the side of the room on her right hand. "Open the wardrobe, Mr. Noel," she said. "I don't go near it, I touch nothing in it, myself. Take out the dresses with your own hand, and put them on the bed. Take them out one by one, until I tell you to stop."

He obeyed her. "I'll do it as well as I can," he said. "My hands are cold, and my head feels half asleep."

The dresses to be removed were not many—for Magdalen had taken some of them away with her. After he had put two dresses on the bed, he was obliged to search in the inner recesses of the wardrobe, before he could find a third. When he produced it, Mrs. Lecount made a sign to him to stop. The end was reached already: he had found the brown alpaca dress.

"Lay it out on the bed, sir," said Mrs. Lecount. "You will see a double flounce running round the bottom of it. Lift up the outer flounce, and pass the inner one through your fingers, inch by inch. If you come to a place where there is a morsel of the stuff missing, stop, and look up at me."

He passed the flounce slowly through his fingers, for a minute or more—then stopped and looked up. Mrs. Lecount produced her pocket-book, and opened it.

"Every word I now speak, sir, is of serious consequence to you and to me," she said. "Listen with your closest attention. When the woman calling herself Miss Garth came to see us in Vauxhall Walk, I knelt down behind the chair in which she was sitting, and I cut a morsel of stuff from the dress she wore, which might help me to know that dress, if I ever saw it again. I did this, while the woman's whole attention was absorbed in talking to you. The morsel of stuff has been kept in my pocket-book, from that time to this. See for yourself, Mr. Noel, if it fits the gap in that dress, which your own hands have just taken from your wife's wardrobe."

She rose, and handed him the fragment of stuff across the bed. He put it into the vacant space in the flounce, as well as his trembling fingers would let him.

"Does it fit, sir?" asked Mrs. Lecount.

The dress dropped from his hands; and the deadly bluish pallor—which every doctor who attended him had warned his housekeeper to dread—overspread his face slowly. Mrs. Lecount had not reckoned on such an answer to her question as she now saw in his cheeks. She hurried round to him, with the smelling-bottle in her hand. He dropped to his knees, and caught at her dress with the grasp of a drowning man. "Save me!" he gasped, in a hoarse, breathless whisper. "Oh, Lecount, save me!"

"I promise to save you," said Mrs. Lecount; "I am here with the means and the resolution to save you. Come away from this place—come nearer to the air." She raised him as she spoke, and led him across the room to the window. "Do you feel the chill pain again on your left

side?" she asked, with the first signs of alarm that she had shown yet. "Has your wife got any eau-de-Cologne, any sal volatile in her room? Don't exhaust yourself by speaking—point to the place!"

He pointed to a little triangular cupboard of old, wormeaten walnut-wood, fixed high in a corner of the room. Mrs. Lecount tried the door—it was locked.

As she made that discovery, she saw his head sink back gradually on the easy-chair in which she had placed him. The warning of the doctor in past years—"If you ever let him faint, you let him die"—recurred to her memory, as if it had been spoken the day before. She looked at the cupboard again. In a recess under it, lay some ends of cord, placed there apparently for purposes of packing. Without an instant's hesitation, she snatched up a morsel of cord; tied one end fast round the knob of the cupboard door; and seizing the other end in both hands, pulled it suddenly with the exertion of her whole strength. The rotten wood gave way; the cupboard doors flew open; and a heap of little trifles poured out noisily on the floor. Without stopping to notice the broken china and glass at her feet, she looked into the dark recesses of the cupboard, and saw the gleam of two glass bottles. One was put away at the extreme back of the shelf; the other was a little in advance, almost hiding it. She snatched them both out at once, and took them, one in each hand, to the window, where she could read their labels in the clearer light.

The bottle in her right hand was the first bottle she looked at. It was marked—*Sal volatile*.

She instantly laid the other bottle aside on the table without looking at it. The other bottle lay there, waiting its turn. It held a dark liquid, and it was labelled:—*Poison*.

#### PRINCELY TRAVEL IN AMERICA.

GIVE two performers the same piece of music to execute successively, and you will hear two series of quite different musical effects. Set two artists to sketch the same landscape, and you will obtain two pictures which are anything but a repetition one of the other. So likewise with written description. Style, habits of thought and observation, vary so widely in different individuals, that it is as impossible for two travellers to make the same remarks on what they see, as it is for two clocks to keep strictly accurate time together.

Prince Napoleon, during his recent American tour, was accompanied by at least two ready writers. Of the first, Monsieur Sand, we have already given a short specimen.\* A second, Lieutenant-Colonel Ferri Pisani, aide-de-camp to the prince, has also published a volume of well-written letters on the United States.

\* A French View of Stars and Stripes, page 612, volume vii.

That two books on the same subject are better than one, is proved by a little anecdote told by our present writer. M. Sand, for nobody knew what reason, thought proper to pass a night in a carriage, instead of in the tent prepared for him. The cold prevented his closing his eyes all night long, and morning found him in very bad humour. He was blind to the picturesque and novel spectacle around him, which would have delighted his illustrious mother. He was bitter against America in general, and against the South in particular. He was specially indignant at the conduct of a herd of oxen, who surrounded his dormitory, and kept him awake with their concerted bass music. From that moment his anti-slavery views assumed an intenseness, which demonstrates that broken sleep may prejudice a traveller unfavourably. Let us hear, therefore, what our author has to say respecting other influences.

When Prince Napoleon arrived in America, in July 1861, the Federal party was in deep discouragement. With the exception of the prince himself—whose faith in the issue nothing can shake, and of certain statesmen at Washington, who are personally engaged in the question—nothing was to be met with in the Northern States but apprehensions, sinister auguries, presentiments of a coming catastrophe, and that in the republican as well as the democratic party, in the diplomatic corps as well as in the intellectual and financial aristocracy of the country. The predictions then current, inspired by the lessons of history, and supported by logic and probability, were completely unfavourable to the cause of the North. Never, they said, can the five or six hundred thousand men necessary to subdue the South be levied out of a population averse to the profession of arms, and generally indifferent, if not divided, touching the question of slavery. Recent events seem to confirm the conviction.

West Point is a sort of American Polytechnic School, which, while no one suspected it, was nursing many of America's present and future great men. Nothing but the civil war, the governmental anarchy, and the humiliating position of the United States in respect to the rest of the world, could have brought about so unexpected a result. These men first appear on the military stage; but everybody feels that they must shortly pass on to political scenes. Already the South has chosen a West Point man, Jefferson Davis, for president; for West Point is divided like the rest of the nation, and supplies chiefs to both parties. Generals Beauregard and Johnston are at the head of the Secessionist movement; McClellan and McDowell are the heroes of the Union. Their names replace in every mouth the names of politicians whose faults have brought the United States to the brink of the abyss. It looks almost like a game of French and English at school. In the war of Western Virginia, McClellan had to cope with two West Point chums, one of whom was killed, the other taken prisoner. Beauregard and McClellan, the

military chiefs of the conflicting parties, were not only comrades, but intimate friends. When Beauregard went into the North, he had no other house than McClellan's; and when McClellan went down South, he always took up his quarters with Beauregard. On either side they are acquainted with each other most intimately, and it ought to be recorded that in both camps might be perceived sentiments of chivalrous esteem for old friends now become implacable enemies.

In order to appreciate the value of this new West Point element which is making its way to the front in the fray of parties in the United States, one requires to have had a near view of the persons who are disputing with each other the conduct of affairs. Since the days of Washington and Jefferson, since the writing of M. de Tocqueville's famous book, American manners have greatly changed for the worse. In the midst of an unhealed material prosperity, of an unexampled commercial and manufacturing activity, the moral and intellectual level has been sensibly lowered, principally in political regions. The men who possess a certain amount of authority, in consequence of their knowledge, character, and fortune, have gradually retired from public business, through disgust at the electoral struggles, dislike to coming in contact with venality, and fear of a violent, passionate, and unscrupulous press. In the United States, it is the fashion, a sort of stamp of respectability, to abstain from polemic politics—exactly as in France it is the rage to run after all sorts of public functions. The last real American statesmen, such as Clay, Webster, and Calhoun, have died within the last ten years. But, if there still remain in the government, in the opposition, and in temporary retirement, a few intelligent, or moral, or patriotic men—Seward, Sumner, Chase, Breckenridge, Cass, and Everett—it still may be stated that, generally, the conduct of the affairs of the Union has become the monopoly of a certain number of men without antecedents, without education, and, too often, without morality, disguising under senseless party names the absence of all principle, and a blind obedience to the caprice of the multitude.\*

Is it surprising, then, that under circumstances so humiliating to the national pride, and complicated by a violent crisis, the public should instinctively turn to a class of men, who, both by education and profession, are the enemies of moral and material disorder,—who have taken for their model, both in their soldierly career and in their duties as citizens, the great founder of the Republic, Washington?

The imperial party paid a visit to General McDowell, then commanding the troops encamped on the right bank of the Potomac. When the prince entered his quarters, the general was busy drawing up a detailed and careful plan of the battle of Bull's Run, to illustrate his report, which was shortly to appear.

General McDowell is forty-three, tall and

strong. His countenance is not very intellectual, but remarkably open and sympathetic, with an expression of frankness and good nature. His conversation, temper, and principles, are still superior to his outward appearance, prepossessing as that may be. He is a most straightforward, truthful, and unaffected person. He had suffered a terrible check, and he spoke of it without bitterness or recrimination, with an accent of sincerity, and an elevation of sentiment, which did him the greatest honour. Deprived of the chief command, in consequence of that reverse, he saw McClellan, his West Point schoolfellow, several years younger than himself, inherit his honours, his position, and his growing popularity. He retained, without complaint or afterthought, an inferior place under the man whose mission was to repair the misfortune coupled with his own name. And, with all this, nobody doubts that McDowell is the most obedient and devoted of McClellan's lieutenants.

After having seen the army of the North, and made intimate acquaintance with its principal generals, the prince desired to inspect the Secessionist camp under equally favourable circumstances. Delicacy prevented him from mentioning that wish directly to the Federal government, so he projected an excursion to Mount Vernon, close by, as a hint. The excursion was made, without the hint being taken. It was therefore decided that the French minister, Baron Mercier, should break the ice, and distinctly request for his imperial highness permission to traverse the lines of the army of the Union and pass over to the Confederate camp. The American minister received the application with a readiness and good will, which proved that in affairs in America there is no occasion to be either too scrupulous or too diplomatic. Mr. Seward replied by the immediate offer of his services. The news soon spread, and numerous generals, senators, and members, complimented the prince on an idea which appeared to them completely in the American taste. "You have seen one side," they said, "you ought now to see the other; and we hope, for the honour of America, that they will receive you as well as we have received you ourselves."

At eleven in the morning, they found themselves in the unoccupied and neutral zone which separates the two armies. This part of Virginia is severe and monotonous, scarcely peopled, almost uncultivated. The ground, slightly undulating, offers nothing, as far as the view can reach, but woods intersected by wide glades, with a few sparse rural habitations which bear the trace of recent disasters. They followed a broad but ill-kept road, which goes from Alexandria to Warrenton by Fairfax and Centreville, and traverses Bull's Run about two miles from the latter spot. About twelve miles from Alexandria, at noon, their escort made a sudden stop. The officer, followed by his standard-bearer and trumpeter, galloped forward. They had fallen in with the outposts of the army of the South.

Matters passed in the most regular and courteous manner. A Secessionist officer came

\* See "The Young Man from the Country," page 540, volume vi.

and parleyed with the Union officer, who acquainted him with the purport of his mission. The transfer of the guest to the South having been effected, the two officers exchanged cards and a shake of the hand, and the prince made them drink, and drank with them, a bottle of French wine to the prosperity of the American people—a vague expression, but the only one a stranger could employ.

After two hours' march under the escort of a squadron of Secessionist cavalry, they arrived at Fairfax, an advanced position occupied by a considerable force. A superior officer, Colonel Stuart, who commanded the camp, received the prince without surprise or embarrassment, and with dignified and cordial courtesy. He begged them to partake of breakfast, which they accepted without hesitation, for two good reasons: first, they were dying of hunger; secondly, they understood that the colonel's invitation was a polite mode of keeping them at Fairfax until he had applied for orders to the general-in-chief. In fact, they were scarcely seated at table, when a telegraphic despatch from Manassas was brought in, in reply to one which had been sent. General Beauregard ordered Colonel Stuart to receive the prince warmly, and to supply him with every means of reaching Manassas, where the leaders of the Secessionist army would be happy to see him.

From the first meeting, they were able to form an idea of the external appearance of the Secessionist soldier. They ascertained at once that the uniform question, rather undecided in the North, was not decided at all in the South. It did not appear that the attempts made in that direction went further than the distribution to a few corps of a sort of vest of coarse grey cloth, said to be made in Virginia. Uniform coats, or fancy coats, the whole dress was in wretched condition; the soldier, nevertheless, maintained a martial aspect in spite of his rags; and perfect order reigned throughout the camp.

What most struck the visitors was the cavalry, which was very numerous, admirably mounted, and composed of magnificent men. At the first glance, it was evident that all these people belonged to the English, and not to the German race; that they were the sons of farmers and landowners; that their horses were their own property; that they were habituated, if not to arms, at least to rough and manly exercise. Consequently, nothing could be more picturesque than those cavaliers of the South. They wore the most impossible costumes, clothes tattered by a three months' bivouac, hats without tops, boots without soles, with an air of heroic bearing which would do honour to Don Cæsar de Bazan. And, as these ragged cavaliers have handsome and energetic countenances, as their horses are superb and are ridden with great boldness, you cannot help admiring them exactly in the same way as you would admire the fantastic military figures invented by Salvator Rosa.

At a short distance from Manassas, the

prince was received by the staffs of Generals Johnston and Beauregard. If they had not been in the midst of republicans, the visitors would have said that those staffs were composed of the flower of the Southern nobility. Many of them were in possession of enormous fortunes. Disinterested in this civil war, unconnected with the hatreds, the passions, the interests which had lighted it, the strangers were necessarily affected by the aspect of some of these men with white moustache, aristocratic and military bearing, and distinguished manners, who had left their homes, their families, their high local position, to serve, as aides-de-camp, a young and hitherto unknown general in the most cruel form of war.

It is incontestable that there is much more passion and ardour among the officers of the army of the South than among those of the army of the North. In the Confederate camp, it is asserted that the same ardour, the same disinterested devotion to the common cause, is evinced by the private soldiers; that in the South, men serve out of patriotism and honour, while with the Federals the soldier yields to no other temptation than pay, to no other impulse than poverty—the best recruiting officer amongst the populations of large towns. It is just possible that the Southern chiefs generalised too widely a fact which is perhaps true within certain limits. Individual valour did really appear superior in the camp of the Confederates; but the army of the Union counterbalanced that defect by a more advanced military organisation and instruction; so that, with such different and counterpoising elements, it was difficult to predict on which side the fortune of war would prevail.

At seven in the evening, they arrived at the house which serves as General Johnston's quarter general; he was waiting for the prince, and a moment afterwards General Beauregard came to join them. Beauregard is of French origin; that is, his family emigrated from France to Canada about a hundred and fifty years ago. His father left the English colony to become a citizen of the United States, and settle at New Orleans. There he changed his faith, abjured Protestantism, and embraced the Roman Catholic religion, which is that of the general and his family. Brought up at West Point, Beauregard was a lieutenant-colonel in the regular army of the United States when the civil war broke out; he had just been named to the superior commandment of the West Point school. The government of his state, Louisiana, called him home and made him quit the Federal army; and his old schoolfellow, Jefferson Davis, immediately conferred on him the rank of general, and the commandment of Charleston militia. It will be remembered that this command afforded the occasion of firing the first cannon-shot which rent the flag of the thirty-four stars. He bombarded and took Fort Sumter, which success procured him immense popularity. When the Secessionist army was formed to march upon Washington, Beauregard was selected to command it.

Beauregard is forty years of age. He is short, very dark, thin, and extremely vigorous, although his features are already worn and his hair is bleached before its time. Face, physiognomy, language, accent, every personal characteristic, is French. His courage is great and undisputed, and everything about him denotes, if not a thoroughly superior intelligence, at least a very remarkable military aptitude. He is quick, abrupt, and, although perfectly well bred, must sometimes wound, not so much by the things he says, as by his manner of saying them. Perhaps he is not sufficiently careful to repress the outbursts of his ardent nature, conscious of its own value, and confirmed by an enormous military success. He is passionate in his defence of the cause he serves; and he takes but little pains to conceal his passion under a calm exterior. In short, the South has found in him a man of uncommon energy, of all-devouring activity, and indomitable power of will—characters which mark men who are destined to lead parties and win battles. General Johnston, also a pupil of West Point, is a little older than Beauregard. He was a colonel in the regular army at the time of secession. He brilliantly conducted the war in Mexico, and enjoys in the United States a great reputation for ability and integrity. Whether his difficulty in speaking French compelled him to play a silent part in the prince's presence, or whether he was thrown into the background by his more showy colleague, he struck his visitors as being excessively reserved, unnecessarily modest, and oppressed by melancholy. This obscured his well-known brilliant qualities.

During the dinner, which took place at eight o'clock, and during the conversation, which was continued until midnight on the steps in front of General Johnston's house, General Beauregard and the chiefs around him did not wait to be questioned about the military, political, and economical affairs of the South. The view they took of things was remarkable. They set aside (as secondary, settled, or still undecided questions) slavery, the tariffs, territorial limits, Lincoln's election, and even the right of secession. They took high ground, which appeared to them above all discussion or controversy. They have vowed to the North a mortal hatred, they will wage against it an implacable war, because the North has made an armed invasion of their territories, their native land; because they are driven to defend against it their homes, their honour, and their liberty. From the general-in-chief to the lowest soldier, everybody held the same language with wonderful unanimity. It was the watchword of the party, and probably also their conviction.

It may be mentioned that the American generals, in the armies both of the North and the South, lead an extremely simple life; too simple, perhaps, considering the pay allowed to their high positions. A few iron knives and forks, plates, and spoons, compose the whole of their campaigning dinner-service; and it is probable that under every-day circumstances, when they

are not receiving the visit of a prince, their bill of fare does not greatly differ from that of the common soldier. These frugal and unrefined tastes are consistent with American habits; moreover, in a military point of view, there are excellent reasons for approving them. But what appeared to be regretted, was, the absence amongst them of all prestige in the exercise of command. The functions of the aides-de-camp were exclusively confined to military service, and were quite exempt from private service about the person of the general. It seemed strange to behold a general-in-chief without any medium of communication with the lower world of subalterns, soldiers, or domestics attached to his quarters. The intimate relations which make the general's house the aide-de-camp's also, which place under the charge of the latter all the details of housekeeping, are the source of mutual devotion and friendship, at the same time that they raise the command above the somewhat vulgar cares of daily life.

The American general lives, in his tent, in a sort of abandonment which strongly contrasts with the movement that surrounds French general officers. And besides, except a few imperceptible tokens, there is nothing in his dress to distinguish him from subaltern officers. Except on grand occasions, he moves about among the troops without escort, parade, or military honours. To counteract so much outward simplicity, requires a dose of moral ascendancy and personal prestige which are not to be met with frequently. Democratic habit, or, to speak correctly, the absence of military habit in the United States, gives to the intercourse of officers with their superiors in rank a free-and-easiness which shocks European beholders. There is scarcely a shade in the mode of saluting to distinguish the highest from the lowest rank. The inferior is the first to offer, without hesitation, the American shake of the hand to his superior; and a lieutenant or a captain was often seen to present his general to his colonel.

After these pictures from the South, let us turn to a few photographs of the North. The passage of the North Star steamer over Lake Huron allowed Colonel Pisani time to describe his travelling companions and their peculiar ways. There were eighty-five first-class and thirty-five second-class passengers on board. The size and position of the cabins made the only distinction between the two classes. The table and the saloon were equally open to everybody; that is to say, people lived on terms of the most complete equality. If a similar confusion of ranks, classes, and fortunes, were to be suddenly introduced into France, and established in French railways, steamers, and tables d'hôte; if the elegant woman of the world were obliged to take her seat beside the humble housekeeper, and the man of leisure to elbow the horny-handed workman; the result for all parties would be an unpleasant collision, from which the sincerest democrats would be the first to

suffer. Of this there can be no doubt; and one of the causes of the mutual and deep antipathies which arose from the revolution of 1848, and the traces of which still remain, lay perhaps in the forced approachment and artificial mixture of all classes, in which French society, where fashion is everything, thought fit to indulge suddenly and without preparation. A longer time is needed for the transformation of manners and habits than of opinions and principles.

Whenever, in France, people belonging to different classes find themselves exceptionally placed side by side under conditions of real equality, that is to say, in circumstances unconnected with work, commandment, or business—they get out of the difficulty very clumsily. The man of the people, feeling himself constrained, exaggerates the roughness of his manners, in order to conceal his embarrassment. The gentleman tries to do dignity, and frequently does nothing better than pride. It is not difficult to guess that if, in the United States, all social distinctions are habitually confounded in the practice of a life in common, and if nobody suffers in consequence of the mixture, the reason is that distinctive characters are much less strongly marked there than in France, and that they disappear beneath a sort of general level. For this, there are several causes; in the first place, costume. Is it quite certain that, for the French themselves, the coat is not the principal indication of the man to whom they will offer a chair, as distinguished from the man whom they will receive standing? In the United States, these external signs almost completely disappear in the general uniformity of the fashion. Wealthy persons dress very ill, or very simply, if you prefer the expression. They purchase, in general, ready-made clothes and shoes, which they wear till they are worn out, without any change of dress, and then throw them away, to buy others. The poor, the artisans, even the labourers almost all wear the regular black coat and hat. It is their official costume as American citizens. They put it on, the moment they can throw off their working clothes; and the dress which in France would be considered to belong to the drawing-room, frequently figures in America, either complete or incomplete, in the midst of the most unaristocratic employments. Like habits prevail amongst the women; they all wear hats, completely upsetting French ideas of social propriety.

It will be clear from this, that every assembly of Americans, although belonging to the most different conditions, must present to the eye an aspect of uniformity. If you look deeper, if you listen to conversation, you are not less struck with the simple and monotonous character of the ideas put in circulation, with the facility afforded to the least cultivated mind for understanding them and rising to the common level. The price of cotton or of maize, the internal affairs of the State (much more frequently than those of the Federation), discussions

about the personality of the President in office and of his probable successors, are almost the invariable theme of American conversation, whether it take place in the saloon or the workshop, at the club or in the street, at the table d'hôte, or the steamer, or in the railway car. Now, as these simple questions fill the immeasurable columns of innumerable journals to satiety and with perpetual repetition, and as the conscientious study of these heavy productions is the passion, the daily bread, of a nation where everybody can read, and whose almost only amusement is reading, it follows that everybody has access to the common fund which feeds the intellectual movement of society.

The Americans have, therefore, comparatively weak motives to divide and subdivide themselves into classes, categories, coteries. Above all, they are accustomed to live pell-mell, side by side, in public places, whose analogues in Europe are separated into boxes and compartments, enclosed or barricaded. Every one is at his ease, regardless who may be his neighbour. The first comer, never mind who, is addressed as Sir; and a most convenient custom it is. You are not obliged to hunt, without finding it, for a proper appellation in each particular case; for when you doubt whether you ought to address a person as Monsieur, and are ignorant of his profession, you are almost obliged to say, "Eh! l'homme!" "Well, fellow."

There they were, then, a knot of aristocratic Frenchmen in the midst of a hundred and fifty Americans of all possible conditions, ranks, and trades; wealthy landowners with their wives and children, parties of young misses taking care of each other, austere Quaker families, modest households of artisans, pioneers, miners, factory people, adventurers and tourists; some travelling for pleasure, others for business; many without any precise or determined object, but rushing forward, in the pursuit of fortune, to the still virgin tracts of the North and the West, and leaving to chance, with American confidence and want of forethought, whether they should work in mines, clear forests, turn inn-keepers, merchants, or journalists; or whether for a few dollars they should purchase an immense territory, destined one day perhaps to be worth a kingdom.

And never did they meet, either in France, England, or the numerous countries they had visited, with a set of people, somewhat considerable in number, capable of leading for a whole week a more calm, decent, and sociable life, than that led on board the North Star. "Sociable," however, requires explanation; for all those people appeared to mix very little amongst themselves. Everybody lived with his party, if he had one, or all alone in his corner (always the same corner), reading his journal (always the same journal, and probably the same number). They were neither chatty, nor communicative, nor inquisitive, nor gay; to be plain, they had a sad and wearied air. Their

sociability was great towards the prince and his suite, who were treated with every form of discreet attention and mute politeness. As they passed, the most surly countenances brightened with an engaging smile; hands, usually buried in the pockets of paletots, left their retirement to place any desired object within nearer reach; every remark, when overheard and understood, received an obliging, timid, half-whispered reply. The gangways were always clear before them; and if nobody took off his hat, the reason was that every nation is free to choose its outward form of salutation. The Arabs touch lips, the Turks foreheads, another Asiatic people show their esteem and affection by a reciprocal friction of the nasal cartilage. These polite attentions and constant courtesies were an exception to the usually stiff and unsocial habits of the Americans among themselves; and the travellers could not help receiving them as a proof of good will towards the French, and of admiration for imperial France and the name of Napoleon.

Everybody on board was perfectly acquainted not only with every particular respecting the prince, but also with every detail respecting his aides-de-camp and friends which possessed the slightest anecdotal or historic interest. The heavy labours of the American press on the princely voyage commenced the very day that the Jérôme Napoléon cast anchor in New York roads. Instead of the beplumed and embroidered authorities who, in any other country, would have come on board to offer their compliments and services, the vessel was overrun, the instant it arrived, by a crowd of busy gentlemen, who set to work to measure its length and breadth, to count the cannon and the crew, to note the names of the sailors and passengers, to interrogate everybody they could lay hands upon as to the ages of the prince and princess, their height, the colour of their hair, their daily habits: not forgetting the Duchesse d'Abrantès, who was the special object of marked curiosity and interest. These were agents of the New York journals; their numbers may be estimated from the fact, that in the state of New York alone there are more than six hundred daily papers.

From that moment, the scattered features gleaned by ocular inspection, by direct questions, by approximation, by correspondence from Europe, relative to the prince, the princess, and their suite, took definite form and shape, after a thousand contradictory changes, in a compact and almost official body of information. It was a half-historical, half-mythical compilation, which the localities traversed, transmitted from one to the other. And since, quickly as the party travelled, the post and the telegraph travel quicker still, they invariably found every evening at their night's lodging their invariable history at the head of the morning journals. At whatever landing-place the North Star touched, enormous packets of newspapers were thrown on board, all containing

the stereotyped article. They could not lay hands on a printed sheet without finding their own biographies. American literature of the second order—the journals principally—is unequalled in its heaviness, being made up of crude compilations, weighty accumulations of false or veritable facts, ridiculous hoaxes, childish declamation, without judgment, wit, or intellect. You see that, before all considerations, “copy” must be had to fill the twenty immense columns of microscopic type which compose the journal, and that the American public must be served at any price with a thick and farinaceous meal, which will fill up a wide gap in its stomach, and which it can ruminate for many an hour during wearisome evenings, and in the intervals of business and labour.

Their threadbare forms of phraseology become amusing from their very tiresomeness. They seriously stick to figures of rhetoric which are elsewhere left to the showman and the auctioneer. Generally, the puff style has the ascendant. No mere name would sufficiently attract public attention, unless preceded by the epithet “celebrated.” M. Sand was never mentioned except as the celebrated son of the celebrated author of *Consuelo*. Ragon, the celebrated captain of the attack of the Malakoff, was the object of lively admiration and respectful terror. Bonfils, having been governor of Guadeloupe, could not help being the celebrated governor of the Antilles, as well as “the royal looking gentleman.” Colonel Pisani consoled himself for the obscurity which covered his own name, first by the maxims which vaunt mediocrity, and secondly by the facility of escaping the oppressive demonstrations “with which a tyrannical and brutal popularity often surrounds its favourites.”

Although the representatives of the most sociable people in the world, the party were slow in responding to the advances made to them from all quarters. They thought it cleverer to laugh at everything strange, without bestowing further attention upon it. This refers neither to the prince nor to Baron Mérier. The prince was the fondest of travelling, and the best able to turn travelling to advantage. Nothing wearied, nothing discouraged him; nothing appeared to him indifferent or ridiculous. For him the love of information gave serious interest to everything new. The baron is also a true traveller, knowing neither fatigue, ill humour, nor ennui. Ever gay, he helped the prince in his inquiries, reading and taking notes, while the gentlemen of the suite were looking out for subjects of laughter, and even for pretexts for going to sleep—which the prince called “travelling like carpet-bags.”

Colonel Ragon met with a singular adventure. From New York they were closely followed by a personage of ascetic and sombre mien, though with a somewhat military air. On railways, in hotels, on board the North Star, he was constantly dogging their heels. Evidently, he fol-

lowed them; and they often remarked the attentive and penetrating look with which his deep-set black eyes regarded them, and especially M. Ragon. "It is Melmoth," they told him, "who is trying to make a bargain for your soul." Seriously, if they had not been in America (where there are neither spies nor secret agents\*), they might have fancied that some vigilant and protective administration had imposed upon them this singular travelling companion; for he could not be mistaken for one of the agents of publicity who were incessantly running between their legs, and who, moreover, take no pains to conceal their interested curiosity, but who seized their victims by the arm, to demand their names, surnames, quality, condition, and other biographical details.

At last, one fine day, in the middle of Lake Huron, the mysterious gentleman took a decisive step. As if unable to keep his oppressive secret any longer, he stalked straight up to Baron Mercier, and requested a moment's conversation. Then, introducing himself by name (which is Irish) and title (major in the American militia), he told him that he had every reason to believe M. Ragon to be, like himself, of Irish origin; that he consequently could not doubt the French colonel's sharing the sentiments of the immense population, of the same race and the same religion with himself, which is spread over the territory of the United States; that those sentiments involved implacable hatred of England, the spoiler of their common ancestors, the mortal enemy of their unhappy brethren who still remain bound to the soil of their ancient country. Thereupon the major entered into the most extraordinary details respecting a vast and mysterious association which, he said, embraced the totality of Irish Americans, and whose object is not only to sustain and perpetuate in the New World their glorious nationality exiled from the Old, but also one day to carry back to the land of oppressors the evils with which they have crushed their victims. He asserted that this gigantic league is completely organised, that its financial and military resources are quite ready; that fifty thousand armed Irishmen, enrolled in regiments, only await a signal, the occasion of a war, and of European support, to invade England, and gratify, by setting fire to London, a vengeance of which the Celtic race preserves in its heart the hope and the secret ever since King Arthur's death. He concluded by saying that Ragon's reputation, and his position in the French army, designated him, together with an illustrious marshal, as one of the men whom Ireland would remind, when the supreme struggle arrived, of their origin and the sorrows of their ancestors!

A confidential communication like this was rather perplexing for a minister of the French Emperor. Whatever allowance might be made for the major's personal excitement, his hopes and his projects were not the less founded on

the perfectly incontestable hatred which the Irish Americans bear to England—a hatred which emigration, far from extinguishing, has rendered more lasting and terrible. The baron could not with decency appear to lend an ear to the revelation of a sort of plot, however imaginary. He escaped the difficulty by assuring the mysterious stranger that he was utterly mistaken as to Ragon's nationality; that the Ragons were Frenchmen and Burgundians from father to son; and that he was not aware of his (Ragon's) having any political hatred, either personal or inherited, from his ancestors.

The major seemed completely upset by this statement. He hung about the party for a little while longer, and then suddenly disappeared at one of the numerous stoppages which the steamer made on the banks of the lake.

On reading this, Mr. Cobden may admit that, even if the major were not raving mad, and even if the French have no intention of troubling us, still a little volunteering now and then may be indulged in, without committing a national sin.

#### THE HOME-WOOD.

AND here's the wood again where I,

Long years ago, shot hawk and pigeon;  
And yonder, through that clump of beech,

I see the lake—the haunt of widgeon  
(The blue sky's little looking-glass),  
Where oft I swam, and oft I boated,  
And there, by yonder osier clump,  
The lily floats, as lilies floated.

Still the nut-bush wide-branching rears  
Its springy rods, so gay with tassels,  
Where the great oak a monarch stands,  
Girt round by the young trees—his vassals.  
The ground is purple still with leaves,  
Or with green mosses velvet padded,  
In those long ridings of the wood,  
Where often on my cob I've gaddied.

There, where the violets purple blow—  
I've roused the rabbit from the copse,  
With beagles, beaters, cries, and whoops,  
That shook the cones from the fir-tops;  
And often down the leaf-strewn bank  
The rabbits that my Manton slew  
Rolled, and the white fluff of their fur—  
Upon the bramble tendrils blew.

And there, when evening clouds were warm,  
And flushed the lake with rosy red,  
I paced with Kate, and plighted troth—  
Dear Kate! now fifteen summers dead.  
She chided me for wayward moods;  
I plucked the holly twig unseen;  
Then cried, "This leaf is rough with thorns,  
Yet, like my love, 'tis ever green."

The blackbird whistled in the wood,  
And skirting it the kine were browsing;  
The night was lowering dark and fast,  
Good things of day were slowly housing;  
When, as she put her hand in mine,  
I kissed her little lip of rose,  
And then we walked and whispered love,  
And we were happy, Heaven knows!

\* Very doubtful indeed.

But let's forget past joys and loves  
On such gay spring-time morns as these:  
I've heard the huntsman's rousing horn  
Come cheerily ringing through these trees,  
And seen gay scarlet 'tween the oaks  
Gleam bravely forth, as on I rode  
To Dinton coverts, proud and fond  
Of the black mare that I bestrode.

As when wind, rain, and snow blow by  
In fierce procession's stormy hurry,  
Across some soft blue peep of sky,  
Where little rippling white clouds scurry,  
The rainbow blossoms green and red,  
With just a violet tinge below,  
So hopes spring once more in my mind,  
As through dead frosts the blossoms blow.

Since I was here, in torrid lands  
I've wrestled with the hungry lion,  
Spent nights on rafts, trod Alpine snows,  
And gazed from Olivet on Zion.  
I've thought of the old wood in climes  
Shot through with the sun's burning lances;  
I've dreamt of it a score of times  
In desert dreams and tropic trances.

And here I am again returned,  
As the hare wounded seeks the lair  
From whence it started at the dawn.—  
Once more I breathe the balmy air  
Of the fir woodlands; here I'll dwell  
Till the voice summon me away,  
And the great darkness fall on me,  
And hide me from the outer day.

#### AN OLD COUNTY TOWN.

THERE are days in the late summer and early autumn when, from the extreme purity and clearness of the atmosphere, the common shapes of earth seem exalted and transfigured. The reposing sunshine invests all things with its own glory; the distance dies away into a bright ethereal vision; even near objects have a touch of mystery and unwonted loveliness; and the heavens, in their blue immensity, appear at once profounder and less far. The topmost branches and leaves of the trees float in the intensely luminous air, like finest pencillings against the sky. The edges of houses and solid bodies are softened, liquefied, rounded, relieved of everything harsh and incongruous by the influence of some presiding concord. We seem to be gifted with a new eyesight, and to look into the hearts of things. Numberless beauties of form and colour, of contrast and sympathy, which we never perceive on ordinary occasions, unfold themselves, as it were, from some cloudy wrapping, and lie before us. The ancient communion of man with nature is restored, as in the innocent times. The Hamadryads come to us from the old oaks, and Pan from the woody uplands. We do not *observe* all this, for observation implies effort, will, and conscious determination. We *feel* it, by means of an intuitive sense. In such moods of the mind, fostered by such conditions of the atmosphere, it may almost be said that we *see* the harmony of the universe. We recognise the grace and fitness of the most trivial occurrences and ways of nature; and find a new delight even in

the falling of a leaf from a tree, or the rapid movements of the birds across the air.

On a day such as this, though not with all these thoughts taking exact expression in their minds, a party of four entered the county town of Sussex. A brief railway journey had led from the modern refinements of Brighton to the antiquities of Lewes, and had done so by a pleasant route over Downs and across the valley of the Ouse, within sight of ancient ruins, bright meadows, and steep hills. The town is seated in a very amphitheatre of hills, and is connected by the river with the port of Newhaven, seven or eight miles distant on the English Channel. That port, by the way, seems destined to play a more conspicuous part in the future than it has done in the past. Its prosperity has of late years steadily increased. It is admitted to be the best tidal harbour between Portsmouth and the Downs; and a local writer points out that "the great level extending from it to Lewes might be converted into one vast basin, wherein all the royal navies of Europe might safely ride at anchor," thus fulfilling the destiny which some have marked out for Lewes, of becoming "the Liverpool of the South." But with these speculations we have nothing to do beyond thus briefly recording them.

We make our way up from the railway station, and find ourselves in a suburb of the town. The hilly nature of the ground is soon manifest. Here is a road overlooking a breadth of basking meadow-land on one side, and on the other bordered by a great bank embowered in noble old trees, where the pathway glimmers obscurely through the leaves far above the heads of those who walk or drive along the road, and where fragments of the ancient town wall are yet to be seen. This bank is the first terrace of the uplands on which Lewes is built; and higher still, out of sight among the trees, is the High-street. Owing to the irregularity of the ground, and the thickness of the foliage, we are sometimes puzzled to say how the snug villas and cottages are approached which we see starting out every here and there from woody knolls and slopes; but all is so quaint and pretty that we are content to remain in ignorance. Here, to our right, is a narrow lane, with red-tiled roofs and red-brick pavement, so steep that we have to pause occasionally and take breath, though down this precipitous thoroughfare George the Fourth, when Prince of Wales, drove a carriage and four, in order to avoid a longer and safer route. Here are other abrupt and narrow paths, winding between old garden walls of flint, overgrown with weeds and grass. Here are the broad warm-tinted comfortable old country houses, to which we turn with an instinctive fondness, as to something peaceful and seductive. And here at last is the High-street, with very large roofs and very little shop-fronts, a very irregular outline, a very prevalent hue of glowing red and brown and creamy white, and a very general appearance of being cosily asleep in the hot sunshine, with no intention whatever of waking in a hurry. Indeed, why should it awake?

The Assizes are not "on" just now; it is not a market-day nor a fair-day; the independent electors of Lewes are under no present necessity of choosing any one to represent them in parliament; there are no races at the race-course, which has now fallen into a state of decay, though in the time of George the Gentleman it made a great figure in the annals of the turf; and, if the citizens are given to volunteering, this is evidently not one of the mornings on which they turn out for martial exercises. There is nothing going forward of a nature to rouse a solid old country borough from comfortable lethargy; so it dreams on undisturbed. Yes, there is something, after all—a flower-show in the grounds of the Priory ruins. But that is a little way out of the town, and does not trouble its repose.

The Lewesians are far from a frivolous people. We have just seen how the once famous races have declined to the brink of extinction; and a local historian proudly tells us that "the inhabitants of Lewes are too commercial in their pursuits (and, shall we add, too intellectual in their character?) to need the excitement of public amusements." Accordingly, a theatre which formerly existed has been transformed into a mechanics' institute. Perhaps, however, this is hardly surprising in a country town buried amongst hills—a town where relics of the past meet you at every turn; where a house is pointed out at which Anne of Cleves is said to have resided after her repudiation by Henry the Eighth; where another bears the date 1577 on its porch, cut in figures that are unmistakably those of the period; where yet another, at the corner of an alley (a dwelling once the residence of Thomas Paine, the free-thinker), has the angle of its overhanging upper story supported by a grotesque crouching figure in timber, which must have been wrought and placed there in the days when men built houses after some pattern in their dreams; where there is an inn with an ancient vaulted cellar, in which, according to a tradition of the town, the Protestant heretics of the reign of Queen Mary were imprisoned previous to being burnt at a stake in front of the building; where the ruins of a Norman Priory adorn the neighbouring fields, and the battered towers of a Norman castle dominate the High-street.

Both the Priory and the castle owe their origin to the same person—William de Warenne, one of the Norman Conqueror's companions at Hastings, and Gundred or Gundrada, his wife, a daughter of the soldier-king. De Warenne was an earl, and a great favourite of his royal master, who bestowed on him immense estates in the counties of Sussex, Surrey, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and Yorkshire. Lewes was even at that time a walled town of some importance, and in the reign of Saxon Athelstan had possessed two mints, while Hastings and Chichester could only boast of one each. In the later days of Edward the Confessor, according to Domesday Book, some curious and not very reputable customs prevailed

in the borough. The purchaser of a man (those being times in which servants were the property of their lords) paid fourpence to the mayor, who thus had an interest in the slave trade of the period. A murderer might escape punishment by the payment of seven shillings and fourpence; while, in the case of those transgressions which now bring the perpetrators into Sir Cresswell Cresswell's court, the damages were assessed at eight shillings and fourpence, and nothing more was thought about the matter. In these and other instances, the king and the feudal lord shared the profits, in the proportion, respectively, of two-thirds and one-third. Whether William de Warenne did anything towards reforming these customs does not appear. Possibly not, for he seems to have been a rough violent soldier, who probably cared for nothing more than "getting on in the world," after the fashion of the eleventh century. He died very much out of favour with the Church, two-and-twenty years after the Conquest; that is to say, in 1088. The monks of Ely accused him of seizing some of their lands, and they reported that, on the night of the earl's death, the abbot, while lying in bed, heard the soul of de Warenne shrieking for mercy as it was borne through the air by Satan. Gundrada was a very different person. She appears to have been as pious as the most exacting abbot could require, and was doubtless the chief agent in the establishment of the Priory, which was dedicated to St. Pancras: a Phrygian be-headed at Rome in the reign of Dioclesian, for refusing to abjure Christianity. The endowments were munificent, and the monks seem to have lived in right jovial style in the midst of their manors, granges, fisheries, meadows, and woods, the description of which carries one's thoughts, in the glowing language of Pope,

To happy convents, buried deep in vines,  
Where slumber abbots, purple as their wines.

For, as no small quantity of wine was made in England in those days, the comfortable recluses may have had a vineyard about their precincts, for anything we know to the contrary.

Many noble persons were from time to time buried in the church and chapter-house, in exchange for which favour they left gifts of land and money to the Priory; and in this way the monks increased in prosperity as the centuries wore on, until the storm of the Reformation burst over the land. In the year 1537, the existing prior surrendered the establishment into the hands of Henry, whose Vicar-General, Thomas Lord Cromwell (a man in many respects very like his still greater namesake of a century later), sent one of his agents to effect the demolition of the magnificent abbey. The agent was certainly not deficient in zeal; for he soon reduced the stately edifice to a heap of ruins. All that can now be seen of the Priory consists of a few scattered blocks of massive masonry, draped in ivy, weeds, and grasses; a subterranean apartment; and a mound of earth, with a spiral pathway leading to the summit, on

which, it is supposed, the monks of old represented their miracle plays on the subject of the Crucifixion and less tremendous religious events. Several of the conventual buildings, however, were not destroyed at the time of the Reformation, but were turned into private dwellings for noblemen. One of Lord Cromwell's sons (married to a sister of Lady Jane Seymour) lived there; and later in the century the Priory became the property of Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset, one of the best of our early poets, and a writer who, to some extent, anticipated the style of Spenser. All these buildings have now perished with the lapse of ages; though as late as the present century the vast pigeon-house of the ancient monastery maintained its ground—a pigeon-house as big as a church, built in the form of a cross, and capable of accommodating three thousand and two hundred and twenty-eight cooing lodgers!

The railway now runs through the Priory grounds, intersecting the ruins, which border closely on the iron road; and in making the excavations in 1845 some very interesting remains were discovered. Portions of the chapter-house, the refectory, and other edifices, were brought to light; together with numerous skeletons and relics, a jar containing human viscera preserved in brine, and two coffers enclosing the bones of William de Warenne and Gundrada. These coffers were less than three feet in length; but Mr. Mark Antony Lower, acting on behalf of the British Archæological Association, had the bones examined by competent medical gentlemen, who infer from them that the earl must have been upwards of six feet high, and the countess from five feet seven to five feet eight: a goodly couple. The explanation of the discrepancy given by Mr. Lower is, that, on the rebuilding of the abbey, nearly two centuries after the death of the warrior and his lady, the skeletons were removed, and the bones placed in two leaden chests, for reinterment in the chapter-house. The tomb of Gundrada—apparently made at the time the skeletons were transferred, in the thirteenth century—may be seen in the church of Southover, a suburb of Lewes. It was preserved at the Reformation by a gentleman who thought it would do for his own tomb; and it served that office until the year 1775, when it was placed in Southover church. And now, after a long divorce, the remains of the daughter of William the Conqueror repose once more in the costly sepulchre wrought for them by the monks of Lewes Priory.

The castle has fared better than the Priory. We turn off from the High-street, northward, and, passing under a battlemented gatehouse (referred by antiquarians to the fourteenth century, though somewhat modernised at a later period), and through the original Norman gateway, shortly find ourselves at the foot of the steep mound on which the ancient Keep is erected. The main building originally consisted of four towers, of which only two are preserved; and the Keep is one of these. We ascend the rough wooden stairs that have been erected

against the side of the elevation, moving under the boughs of trees that grow freshly out of the craggy mound. It is rather a long way up, but the wind comes pleasantly in our faces from the out-lying Downs and woodlands, and the vital birds are gay and loud in the dry ancient places. And now we are stopped by a low wicket, at the side of which is an announcement to the effect that, if we desire to pursue our researches, we must summon the warder by ringing a bell, when, for the trifle of sixpence each, we may enter the tower, and examine it from basement to leads. All is so old and chivalrous that we feel as if the bell ought to be a clarion, which we, like so many giant-killing Jacks, would valorously sound, and as if the warder, instead of being a pleasant-mannered civilian of the nineteenth century, should present himself in breastplate and morion, grim and defiant. However, we pay the fee, step through the wicket, and, turning once again, see the grey towers rising serene and still from the circular lawn of bright green turf which lies at their base. Trees are there, and flowers, contrasting in their youth and florid beauty with the mouldering antiquity that overshadows them; and silence is there, broken only by the rustle of fallen or of falling leaves, and the movements and voices of the birds which haunt the ivy on the old rough walls; and the winds are there, and the broad autumn sunlight; and below us, spreading far into the distance, lies the fair English prospect, still golden-brown in parts with the ungathered harvest. "When you have reached the leads of the Keep," says the warder, "you will acknowledge that you are in a little Paradise."

We enter the tower; pass up the narrow winding stairs from one tiny round room to another, glancing by the way at the collection of British, Roman, and mediæval relics made by the Sussex Archæological Society, in whose custody the ruins are placed; and at length emerge on the flat roof, from the battlements of which we may look over the town, and across the neighbouring lands. Immediately below, the eye runs along the ruined walls and the mound on which they stand; sees the jagged stonework, and the muffling ivy, and the nestling trees, and the sudden flights of the birds from out their leafy coverts—the kindly mingling of human art in its decay with the enduring life of nature. To the north, extends the rich inland country—hill and dale, woodland and meadowland—the famous Weald of Sussex, uniting with that of Surrey. To the south, are the suburb of Southover, the ruins of the Priory, fields and trees, green ridges of the Downs, and, in the distance, the sea and the port of Newhaven. To the east, the larger part of the town stretches in a labyrinth of red roofs towards the Ouse, which winds and glides and glitters through the whole panorama; and beyond the river rise Cliffe Hill, Mount Caburn, and Fittle Beacon—the last named attaining an elevation of eight hundred and twenty feet. Finally, to the west, towers Mount Harry, of

which English history has something to tell us. For, on that grassy slope, in the year 1264, the confederated barons, under Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, gave battle to the weak King Henry the Third, who, by his exactions and his despotic conduct, had driven a large part of his subjects into armed rebellion. The battle, which was one of the most sanguinary in the middle ages, ended in the defeat of the monarch, who, being driven with his forces into the town, took refuge in the Priory, to which the insurgents endeavoured to set fire. In the town itself, the fight was renewed with great ferocity. The castle was furiously attacked by the barons; but the besieged rained upon their assailants burning missiles, supposed to have been the celebrated Greek fire, and beat them off. Ultimately, however, "Harry of Winchester" (who is thought to have given his name to the mount where he was worsted) was obliged to do as the barons bade him; and the parliamentary system of English government was more firmly established in consequence. But the boon was purchased at the cost of many thousand lives; and when the railway workmen, in 1845, were excavating the Priory grounds, they broke into a charnel pit, from which they took out thirteen waggon-loads of crushed and mangled bones. These remains were doubtless those of men who had perished in the great fight of 1264; and, though nearly six hundred years had passed, the effluvia was still so horrible, that the "navvies" ran away from the spot in mortal loathing.

We are looking out on the sunny landscape from the hot leads, thinking of these things, and congratulating ourselves on the pastoral tranquillity which has succeeded all that rage and tumult of battle, when a sudden rush shakes the air. Have the ghosts of the old warriors risen, and are they charging down the declivities of Mount Harry, as they charged in life? No; this is a sound essentially of our own times. The railway is close at hand, passing by means of a tunnel under the very foundations of the Keep. Now, we see the train plunge into its subterranean vault; now, it is deep down beneath the mound on which the ruins stand; now, it emerges on the other side. The old walls tremble with the swift and fiery strength of this nineteenth-century wonder that shoots below their base, and is so swiftly gone; but the Norman architects piled their masonry as Nature piles her rocks, and the Keep still holds its own against all comers. And there is another modern sound humming in our ears all this while. Away in the town beneath, some wandering minstrel is grinding a hand-organ; and yet, for an organ, it may be called an antiquity. It has doubtless done its duty in the streets of London, and is now playing to the men of Lewes the popular melodies of six or seven years ago.

Amongst the rubbings from old brasses in the rooms of the tower are several containing the knightly effigies of members of the Shelley family, ancestors of the poet; and, coming back again to the High-street after leaving the castle, we see the same name over the door of a baker's

shop. Strange meeting of the chivalrous, the poetical, and the trading, on the common ground of one illustrious name! The stock is as ancient in Sussex as the trees and the hills, and the name is to be found in other places about this very neighbourhood of Lewes. There was a Shelley who went to the Crusades, and who bore three golden shells on the family coat-of-arms, where they are to be seen to this day. Perhaps the blood of that religious warrior runs in the veins of the peaceful maker of daily bread for himself and others; and assuredly, if genealogy be not a vain science, it quivered in the heart of him who may be called the crusader of modern free-thinking. Old castles and new railways—crusaders and audacious poets—here is matter enough for thought as we wend our way towards the station, and leave the ancient borough behind us like a dream that is dreamt.

#### WHAT'S THE USE OF THAT?

LET me introduce you to Monsieur the Chiffonnier of Paris. Let me empty into your lap the ragman's basket. Waste not, want not. These bits of cotton and linen rag shall be transformed into Clorinda's scented billet-doux. When Corydon has carried her despatch of love about for a few weeks in his left-hand waistcoat-pocket, crumpled it, fingered it, and at last, Phillis being in the ascendant, tears it up and flings it out into the mud, out of the mud its fragments shall be rescued to appear again as part of a doll's head or a papier-mâché work-box. Here are shreds of cloth rag in the ragman's collection. They will not make writing-paper, but they will help to make flock papers for the walls of rooms, the scarlet shreds can have their dye soaked out of them and used again, say for the colouring of chessmen, while as for those chessmen, they are to be made from the kitchen bones that have been tossed out among the waste of a household. Or the bones may yield their oil, or they may make glue, or they may re-appear upon the dinner-table in the form of jelly made of patent gelatine; or, burnt into ivory black, they may come into the scullery as blacking, or, perhaps, serve towards the refinement of our best lump-sugar. Or they may be ground for use in fertilising the soil, or they may yield phosphorus for our lucifer-matches, or they may so re-introduce themselves into the house that they shall be kept daintily in crystal and silver and shall get, through the nose of Clorinda to her shaken nerves, for their support when she first hears the perfidy of Corydon. In the name of rags and bones, then, let us lift our hats when we pass by a rubbish-heap. Do we grieve when we see rags? Why, there are not rags enough in this too happy country. We have to import every year three hundred thousand pounds' worth of them.

Did your cook ever throw into the dust-hole a stale crust? Do your children scorn dry scraps of bread? Ring the bell, have them all in, and

tell them this true story: Once upon a time there was an old soldier, and he is alive yet, named Chapellier. Discharged and poor he had made it his business to live by what he could find in the gutters of the streets of Paris,—horse-shoe nails, on lucky days perhaps even a horse-shoe—iron, toughened by much tramping, dear to the gunmaker—poor scraps that, with help from odd street jobs in opening carriage doors and so forth, enabled him to support life. But he sought advancement, and soared from this calling into the service of a wholesale chiffonnier, whose baskets he sorted, and in whose warehouse he arranged the stores, till he fell sick, overpowered by the smell of the articles in which his master traded, and went into hospital. When he came out he hired himself to a poultry merchant and earned forty sous a day by filling his own mouth with peas and then putting them out of his mouth down the young pigeons' throats to fatten them suddenly. But while here he reflected on the fact that a poultry merchant could not get full price for his birds unless they were sold fresh killed on the day of their arrival. However sweet a bird might be to the nose, every cook saw at a glance whether it was fresh killed. How was that? he inquired. Oh, that is because the feet that are brilliant and black on the first day become greyer and duller every day afterwards. The wise Chapellier having reflected on this matter, made experiments, and invented a varnish that should keep the birds' legs brilliant and black for many days. There was a stir in the poultry trade. Glorious was the invention, and Chapellier, who kept his secret, went about painting the feet of the poultry for a fee of twelve and a half per cent upon all sales of second day's stock. So he made money, but it was as an itinerant professor. His desire was to be head of an establishment. He retired, therefore, from the claw-painting business, having sold his secret and his connexion in the trade for forty pounds to a friend who has since made a fortune by it.

What should he do? Would his old master the chiffonnier take him into partnership? He would go and ask. He went and asked. Not without a premium of two thousand pounds. Chapellier could not afford that; but, while he was in the warehouse he was struck by the great number of unsaleable pieces of waste bread brought in the baskets of the rubbish hunters. Here was an idea—this is the lesson for you, cook, and for you, children—and this great man went out and bought a donkey and a cart, and having hired a large room, went with his donkey-cart to all the cooks of schools and colleges and large establishments, to propose purchase from them of all the stale scraps of bread they had been used to throw into the street. They cordially hailed the idea of a new perquisite. Chapellier then bargained with the scullions of eating-houses, and with all the chief cooks of the city, that he might have the dry crusts and scrap, destined to be thrown into the street; he also

contracted with the scavengers for all the bread they found, nevertheless, in the dust-holes and gutters. Having secured his monopoly, this laudable person took his stand one morning in the middle of the chief market of Paris with a large placard on his hat, inscribed, "Bread crusts for sale." The Parisian keeps rabbits, and the rabbits require bread as well as cabbage; the chickens fed for market, also require bread-crumbs. Many domestic pets of the wealthy are in Paris denied meat under the idea that it makes them smell unpleasantly, and so, from one source and another, came a large demand for bread-crusts, sold at threepence a basketful. In four months he had three horses and three waggons at work. In a few years, he sold his business and retired with a competence.

But it was only to come back in a month or two. A refinement on his old idea had occurred to him, and he could not rest until he worked it out. He had seen enough of cooks and sausage-makers to observe the value of bread-crumbs for strewing over cutlets, and for other purposes. Bread-crumbs made of stale bread pounded and grated fetched fourpence per even quart. He would turn his stale bread into bread-crumbs, and sell that at threepence the heaped quart. It was rather hard, to be sure, on his successor, who was ruined in the trade he had bought. But what was to be said? Bread-crumbs are not crusts, and Chapellier was a great creature. As manufacturer of bread-crumbs, then, a mighty trade was driven. But the bread of which the crumbs were made was, some good and some bad. It would not pay to separate good from bad, but it would pay to establish ovens, and sell the crusts baked in lump or grated for the use of cooks as "*crôûtes au pot*." Except at the best houses, these preserved scraps now find their way into almost every Parisian's dish. The burnt bits and scrapings are pounded and sifted to be sold to the perfumers, who will make them into tooth-powder. And thus the Père Chapellier made his fortune. Now, my good (or bad, as the case may be) cook, and my dear children, you observe that a large fortune is to be made by dry crusts and mouldy scraps of bread. And yet you throw them away!

Another ingenious Frenchman lately founded an establishment at La Villette for the revivification of coffee-grounds, which, after mixture with pure coffee and other substances, were sold again as the fresh article, and having been used were yet again bought and revived. Then, as to tea. In France they prefer wine to tea, but what will they do hereafter? Last November, M. Perrie, the librarian of the town of Cahors, who is something of a botanist, wrote to the Emperor, "Sire: Napoleon I. endowed France with an indigenous sugar; your Majesty may now endow the country with an indigenous tea." Two days afterwards, an officer of the household invited M. Perrie to call on him, and took him to the ministry of Agriculture. A committee of exa-

mination was appointed, to whom M. Perrie submitted a packet of his dried wild herbs. After several months of investigation the committee reported, and the Minister of Agriculture has lately informed M. Perrie, that besides having the taste, smell, and colour of the best China teas, his new infusion is tonic and slightly astringent. The grand question of price was all that required to be elucidated. To this the botanist replied, that his plant was a common weed, and even if cultivated could be produced for about twopence a pound, one pound yielding five hundred cups. Will this induce the French to become tea-drinkers? Mr. Simmonds, in his excellent work about Waste Products and Undeveloped Substances, gives a list of as many as ninety-eight plants furnishing in different countries infusions that are used as substitutes for tea. Strawberry-leaves dried in the sun or on hot plates, with or without a dash of black-currant leaf added to represent an aromatic green, make, it is said, no bad imitation of a China tea, and at least a more agreeable and refreshing infusion than the cheap tea usually sold to the poor. It has also been suggested that when we are next troubled with potato famine, we may eat the dahlia roots. The raw dahlia root is bitter like the raw potato, but like the potato when properly boiled it becomes mild and mealy. There certainly would be a trifling difference at present between the cost of a dish of boiled potatoes and that of a dish of boiled dahlia roots, but cultivation of the dahlia might alter that; and think of the gorgeousness of Tipperary landscape when the potato has been superseded, and the dahlia fields are all in blossom! It is worth an artist's while never to eat potatoes, but teach his cook to boil a dahlia root to perfection, and never admit to his table any other than this sort of new potato until our own landscapes become gorgeous in autumn with plum-coloured and claret-coloured fields.

An immense number of German cigars are made of beet and turnip-leaves. When the cook of the future shall have peeled her dahlias, and proceeded to cut the tops from her turnips (if turnips be not then superseded), the intelligent boy in buttons will readily perceive how, by the help of a frying-pan, he can become the maker of his own cigars. He will not throw those turnip-tops into the dust-hole.

We hear a good deal of substitutes for cotton. A partial substitute for it in one or two of its forms has been got in Silesia by use of a "woody wool," made in a factory near Breslau, from the young pointed leaves of the pine-trees. There is another establishment close by, built by the same speculator, M. Pannewitz, in which the waters got from the manufacture of the pine wool are used medicinally. There is another such wool factory at Remda, in the Thuringian forest. The pine-leaves are bundles of tough woody fibre, bound together by a resinous coating. Boiled and re-boiled in caustic alkali, and bleached afterwards by steeping in chloride of lime, they yield a fine

wool wadding, that may be curled, felted, or woven. This material was very soon tried as a substitute for cotton with animal wool, in the making of blankets; and five hundred of the blankets were sold to an hospital in Vienna, where they are exclusively used. It is said that no insect will go to bed under such blankets, although their smell is wholesome and pleasant to the human nose. The same kind of blanket is now used in the penitentiary at Vienna, and in the barracks at Breslau. The pine-leaf fibre can also be prepared into an exact imitation of horse-hair at a third of the price, and the same material is spun, as forest yarn, into jackets, drawers, shirts, stockings, sometimes made to resemble hempen fabrics, sometimes flannel. In making this wool, the oil got is used as a medicine, as a solvent of india-rubber, for lamps, or—being colourless when distilled—is sold to the Parisian perfumers. The alkaline liquid in which the pine-leaves have been boiled, is brought into use as a medicinal bath; the membranous refuse is compressed into blocks of artificial fuel, which is resinous enough to be used in making all the gas that lights the factory wherein so much industry is got out of what used to be thought the commercially useless part of a fir-tree.

These are clear economies. But who will believe that in any civilised parts of the world it is economy to keep up the fires with bread instead of coal, and to make gas out of sugar? Not that the coal-scuttle is filled with dinner rolls, or sugar-basins emptied into the gasometer; but in the prairies of Illinois maize corn was, before the civil war, thirteen or fourteen cents a bushel, and coal ranged from twelve to seventeen cents, so that it was generally cheaper to burn corn than coal; corn having also the advantage that it would give out more heat. As for the sugar gas, in the West Indies, a Mr. Stammers has found that he can get a cubic yard of gas out of about two pounds and a half of molasses. In making beetroot sugar, also, the refuse of the beetroot will make gas enough to light the factory.

It is said that the Moors of the desert keep up the flame of life in themselves for six weeks at a time, during the gum harvest, upon gum-arabic alone, and six ounces of gum-arabic are said to have been found experimentally to be enough to support a man for four-and-twenty hours. That quantity would make two tumblers of stiff mucilage, and it may be worth an economist's while to try how jolly he can make himself upon such diet, and ascertain also, from a phrenologist after a month of it, whether it has brought out his organ of adhesiveness. Probably, however, it would be found in a few days that he could not be got to stick to his diet, especially as in England six ounces of gum cost about the price of a half-quartern loaf, a mutton chop, a slice of cheese, a lettuce, and a pint of porter, all together. We might throw into the bargain half a pound of the new French tea or a few ounces of acorn coffee.

"Acorns," says the recent French introducer of the acorn coffee, "were for a long time the

principal food of man." So M. Hayet gets sweet acorns, roasts them, honestly confesses to them, and says that, although the aroma and stimulating power of his coffee is less marked than that of the colonial article, it is more permanent. "It is," he goes on to tell the purchasing world, "by studying the effects of this new aliment, that we have been able to demonstrate that its daily use regulates the natural functions, restores the health and plumpness of persons weakened by long illness or excessive labour, reanimates the strength of debilitated children and weakened systems." This delight of the breakfast-table costs only tenpence a pound.

Will the schoolboy who throws his orange-peel into the road (unless he certifies to the excellence of his school appetite by eating it) be kind enough to remember that there are people who think it worth while to go all the way to the West Indies for collections of waste orange-peel to be shipped thence in casks for England? It will be considerate in him to keep his orange-peel in his pocket, and look out when he walks abroad for the sort of man who buys that article. In China they make paper of bamboo. Couldn't the schoolboys in a body agitate till they persuaded somebody that he might realise a fortune by building a mill for the manufacture of paper from schoolmasters' canes. Limitation of supply is not usually found to check the sanguine expectations of a speculator in some new material. Paper can be made also of blocks of wood; for which purpose, however, it would be illegal to sell the heads of the schoolmasters who use the canes. Wood in the log, or in bark, has only to be divided into fibre, and Mr. Robertson, at the Albion Foundry, Hobart Town, has found a short way of doing this. He puts the wood into a cannon, of which he then plugs up the mouth. Into the closed cannon, through the touch-hole, he forces high-pressure steam. It penetrates between the fibres of the wood, and at last, when the pressure has reached a certain point, blows out the plug and the wood after it, the wood rent into a wool. One of the best of the hundreds of plants that will yield fibre to the paper-maker is the stinging-nettle, and it is greatly to be wished that the paper-makers would send people about the country to pull up the stinging-nettles that are so much in the way of those who go black-berrying or gather roses by the wayside. We should be glad, also, if Mr. Simmonds would point out that it is worth somebody's while to gather the thorns off the brambles. Could they not be introduced as a moral sort of stuffing to the chairs in the government offices, whereof the waste-paper that is actually sold fetches seven thousand a year, and the waste-paper with which seven times seven thousand unlucky correspondents are sold, is diffused north, south, east, and west by the post-office.

Proud to have hit upon something for which Mr. Simmonds, great in all histories of the economical-convertible, has not discovered a suggested use, here we break off—triumphant. Having

fairly put ourselves above the author, we can afford to give a patronising nod at parting to the book from which we have got every syllable of the information herein given, and might have got thousands of syllables more.

## THE DUCHESS VERONICA.

### IN EIGHT CHAPTERS.

#### CHAPTER VII. NEW YEAR'S DAY AT VILLA SALVIATI.

It is New Year's morning in Villa Salviati, the greatest holiday of the year. What Christmas-day has always been among us in England, the first day of the year has been, and is still, among the nations of continental Europe. Then friendly ties are reknit, and presents and remembrances of all sorts are flying about in every direction. Then, among Roman Catholic communities, it is not only the first day of the year, but the first day of Carnival also; the period, more or less long, according to the fall of Easter, from the beginning of the year till the beginning of Lent, into which the social and religious habits and observances of Romish Christendom prescribe, that all the junketing, the feasting, the dancing, the pomp-and-vanity worshipping, and dissipation of the year shall be concentrated. The theory of carnival keeping is, that Momus, leading forth his gay procession of votaries on the first day of his reign in joyous, yet moderate and orderly mirth and jollity, continually beats the measure of his mad dance quicker and quicker, as the pleasure weeks of the year slip on, until with a "sempre crescendo" movement, and grand finale crash, he brings them, in headlong career of frantic fun and universal licence, suddenly to a dead full stop on the sombre threshold of lenten-tide, which neither he nor his crew may pass. Sharply the mad revellers are pulled up on their haunches. At mystic toll of bell in the small hours of that last night of revelry, sudden as the change in a phantasmagoria, the scene is shifted. The dancing mimes vanish; the preaching friars come in. Feasting is changed to fasting. Pomatum and powder give place to ashes and cowls. The world has had its fling. Now Heaven must have its turn. What has been done amiss according to rule and fashion, must now according to rule and fashion be wiped out by due penitential application, and all made straight. This is the orthodox theory and practice of carnival and lenten-tide.

But Mother Church takes a part also in inaugurating the holiday season. The festival of the New Year commences with full-dress Church ceremonials, and ends with equally, but not more, full-dress balls. A great gathering at the palace, of magnificently embroidered coats, grand powdered perukes, jewelled stars, and crosses, collars and buckles, with more or less noble homunculi within or beneath them! Then all the duke's horses and all the duke's men, and the serenest of highnesses himself, and all the court ladies, and all the court gentlemen, proceed in great state to the cathedral, and are received there by

the archbishops, and the canons, and the vicars, and the deacons, and the precentors, and post-centors, and the acolytes, and the little boys in scarlet gowns swinging their fragrant censers, all in their best array. And everybody bows to everybody else, bows to the right and bows to the left, and the soldiers line the huge nave, and "salute the host" by banging their firelocks on the pavement; and thus the year is well begun by a general performance of religious duties.

But for the nobles of the court circle this state procession to church, and the previous assembling at the grand-ducal palace, is also a duty of etiquette towards the sovereign. It was "expected" that the grandees should pay their compliments personally on that day at the Pitti. And as the mass was at an early hour, and the reception at the palace consequently at one still more matutinal, and as Salviati had to go into the city from the villa, it behoved him to be a-foot at a somewhat earlier hour than usual.

The servants at the villa, for their part, were all up and prepared for the great day, by times. Indeed, there was enough to be done. There was the great state carriage to be got out and prepared, and there were the six great state horses to be caparisoned. And all this had to be done in duplicate—one great state carriage to convey his excellency the duke to the Pitti, and another great state carriage to carry her excellency the duchess. The same portentously clumsy "leathern convenience" could not suffice for the pair—*forbid it etiquette!* A duke and duchess jog to court Darby-and-Joan-wise cheek-by-jowl! Faugh! And then all the spick-and-span new liveries, cumbrous with worsted lace, and silver lace, and gold lace, according to the rank of the wearer in the servants' hall hierarchy, had to be fitted on. A special messenger, too, had to be despatched to the city early that morning. For my lord's new gorgeously embroidered state coat had not come home overnight—the last possible moment being then, as even to the present day, deemed the best in Tuscany for the transaction of all such business. And there would have been trouble in the household if my lord duke had risen on the New Year's morn, and demanding, as it was felt he naturally would, his new embroidered coat with his first waking words, were prevented from forthwith contemplating it.

Fortunately the magnificent garment, the fruit of many a long winter night's vigil, during which weary eyes and skilful fingers had laboured at their dainty work, arrived, just as the silver-embossed hand-bell—(sold, very likely, at the Hotel Drouot to some banker's favourite sultana the other day)—which stood by the duke's bedside, announced to expectant valetdom the fact of his waking. But behold! the change in Jacopo Salviati, which had occasioned so much speculation at court, produces its strange results to the minutely observant eyes of his servants also. His excellency's first thought on this New Year's morning of 1639, has not reference to his own personal adornment!

"Luigi!"

"Eccellenza! A happy new year to your lordship, and may every succeeding one outdo the felicity of its predecessor."

Luigi had got that up carefully overnight, under Francesca's tuition, in the servants' hall.

"Any pretty little compliment will do with my lord," said she. "You have an easy task with him, you gentlemen of the chamber. If the sun shines, and certain sunny eyes we wot of shine as brightly (and I don't think his lordship is likely to look into many sombre ones outside this weary villa), he is sure to be easily pleased. But, by all the saints, we women have a very different job with my lady."

"I declare," continued Luigi, "the sun is shining brighter, as is only natural, since your lordship has awaked."

"Very likely. The day grows older. I think I must recommend you at court, friend Luigi, for a lord in waiting; your talents in flattery are quite thrown away here. But, I want to know whether the casket that came home from the Ponte Vecchio\* last night was sent off this morning according to my orders?"

"Eccellenza, it was."

"Has the messenger returned?"

"Not yet, my lord."

"How long is it since he started on his errand?"

"Nearly three hours, your excellency. He set off long before sunrise."

"Three hours! and the lazy dog is not here to give an account of his mission! Who took the packet?"

"Tonino, my lord, on the roan mare. But his orders were, according to your excellency's directions, to give the packet into no hands save those of the Lady Caterina herself. And it may well be that he had to await her rising."

"Humph! Caterina is not wont to be a laggard in the morning," he muttered to himself rather than to the servant; "and the sun has been up an hour or more. Maybe those rake-hells, Carlini and Serselli, kept the revel up late last night, and sweet Kate's pretty eyes are heavy this morning. When they did open, I flatter myself they brightened a little at the first New Year's gift they lit on. Pretty, sparkling eyes! How I can fancy them laughing back the sheen of the glittering stones as they flashed up at her from their black velvet bed. Ah! Messer Guido, choose as you may the most brilliant diamonds in all your stock, cut them and polish them as you will, they are no match for the eyes you have pitted them against. Your choicest pearls will but lose their colour against that skin. I think I see the pleased smile mantling over those full curved lips as she takes the baubles from their casket and tries the effect of them on that snowy neck and peerless brow. Luigi!"

\* The Ponte Vecchio is, and for centuries has been, the principal habitat in Florence of the jewellers and goldsmiths. The shops on the bridge are occupied by them almost exclusively.

"Eccellenza!"

"Run and see if Tonino has mayhap returned. I must have the answer from Casa Canacci before I go to court."

The New Year's gift which Salviati had sent to Caterina had been, indeed, a splendid one—a tiara and necklace, that might have paled with envy the cheek of a duchess. It had been intended to meet her eyes the first thing on the New Year's morning, and the giver was greedily impatient for his share of the pleasure in the receipt of her acknowledgments. A little word, moreover, was expected to accompany these acknowledgments, assenting to certain proposed arrangements for a meeting after Salviati should have discharged his duty to the grand-duke by appearing for as short a time as he could make it at the state court-ball in the evening. The duke's unwillingness to start on the obligatory gala business of the day before getting the expected answer from Casa Canacci will, therefore, be readily appreciated.

"Eccellenza!" said Luigi, returning with the gorgeous new court coat in his hands, as if he hoped that the sight of it might divert his master's thoughts from the lagging Tonino's tardiness for a few minutes. "Tonino has not yet returned. Doubtless he will be here before your excellency can be dressed. Your excellency's new suit was sent home in good time this morning. I think, though it does not become me to judge, that no cavalier at the Pitti, let him be Strozzi, ay, or the grand-duke himself, will match that, this morning." The experienced valet held the glittering garment artistically, so that the sun's rays glistened and shimmered on the profusion of gold embroidery, encasing pearls and diamonds in its network, as he spoke.

"Good!" said Salviati, glancing at it without much attention, not that he was generally careless of such matters. But Salviati's mind was busy with yet more interesting thoughts.

"Well," said he, "I must get me dressed the while. I shall be late at the Pitti else. Has my lady duchess sent in my linen?"

"Not yet, my lord. I have not yet warned my lady's women that your excellency was stirring."

It must be understood that amid all the gorgeousness of state and ostentatious magnificence characteristic of that period, no lady, however high in rank, if she cared duly to discharge the duties of her station as mistress of a household, would deem herself dispensed from giving her personal superintendence to the fine and costly tissues of linen and lace, which made so important and ornamental a part of the male costume of that day.

"Well, let la Francesca know that I shall be ready for the things presently. And, Luigi, tell Carlo to run to the brow of the hill and look out if he can see Tonino coming up the road. By the holy rood, if he has been letting the grass grow under his horse's hoofs, I will crop his ears for his pains."

\* \* \* \*

Meanwhile, the New Year's morning had opened on another scene in the apartments occupied by the duchess.

She had been up and dressed from the earliest dawn of day. Indeed, her women, cross enough despite the holiday face de rigueur appropriate to the festival, and their hopes of New Year's presents, at the strangely early call on their services, declared to each other that their lady had not been in bed at all. Had she been spending the night in devotional exercises? May be! Who knows what maggot she will take into her troublesome head next? At all events, there is no sign of her prayers—if prayers they have been that have occupied her night—having brought her temper into a Christian frame. Truly, as Francesca had observed to Luigi, while the latter was waiting the summons to his master's chamber, truly her excellency's humours grew more cantankerous every day. There was no understanding her; and if things went on in this way much longer, she, Francesca Berti, should think of looking out for a service in some pleasanter and better regulated household. And now she wished anybody could tell her what was the meaning of it! There was her lady not dressed for court at all. There she was, dressed all in black, as if it were All Souls' Day instead of the New Year's morning.

In truth, the bearing and appearance of the Lady Veronica were little "like the time." When, at daybreak, she had summoned her women, they found her already partially dressed; and the bed, though in some degree disarranged, showed signs of not having been slept in. There was a something, too, in the eye and face of the duchess which, although her women would have been at a loss to describe it, impressed them disagreeably. There was an expression of ferocity in the eye, mixed with a kind of dreamy absence of manner, which was unlike her usual moody sombreness. Her first words, too, were strange and lugubrious.

"A happy New Year to your ladyship, and may the Holy Virgin and the saints give your excellency many such!" said Francesca, performing the recognised duty of the day, in the hope of receiving the usual largess.

"Oh, brava! Francesca," returned the duchess, with a kind of sneering bitterness. "Many years to return like this, and many a New Year's Day of similar colour and quality! What a charming wish! Girl, one such day as this is enough for a lifetime! There be pleasures, they say, which pall on repetition. Thy master sent a messenger to the city this morning. I would know if he has returned."

"He has, my lady; and has brought with him the tailor, bearing his excellency's new court dress—assuredly the richest and sweetest fashion that ever graced a noble gentleman. 'Tis—"

"Hold thy fool's prating!" interrupted the duchess, fiercely. "Thy master sent a messenger this morning to Casa Canacci, in the Via dei Pilastri, and thou knowest well, girl, that it

is of him I would speak. Has the messenger returned from Casa Canacci, I ask?"

"I know not, your ladyship; I will go and see," replied Francesca, glad of an excuse to leave the presence of her mistress.

"A premature return of that man would spoil all!" muttered the duchess to herself, as soon as she was left alone. "But he will not return yet," she continued, musingly; "there will be confusion and much talking over the nine days' wonder. The gadding Tuscan will never resist the temptation of hearing everything that every wiseacre has to say on the matter, and adding his own contribution to the heap of lies no doubt already current. No, no! he will not return yet awhile. It is no use, Jacopo, to be in such a hurry for your messenger's report—he will come time enough! Anxious to know how his pretty present was received! Faith, 'twas a nobly chosen gift! My offering, Jacopo, shall be as rare, ay, and as costly a gift as thine to thy love—thy dainty-featured, bright-eyed love! Sure all that loveliness is mirrored in thy fancy at this moment. So would I have it, Jacopo, my husband! I would have thy warm imagination filled with picturings of that exquisitely tinted cheek—how full of youth and health is the delicate peach-bloom! Is it not, Jacopo?—of that laughing eye! is it not in every beam eloquent of passionate love, as it answers glance for glance to thine own!—of the beautifully rounded spotless marble of that delicate neck! Does the circlet of pearls become it well, my husband?"

As she spoke, she extended both hands, as in imagination tendering some present for acceptance—her body bent a little forward in humble attitude the while, and the face a little upraised. Ah! that face! surely a face to stamp its image on the brain of whoso looked on it, almost indelibly! The fierce ominous scowl on the lowering brow, and the lurid light in the bloodshot eyes, made such terrible contrast with the writhed sneering smile on the cold thin bloodless lips!

The girl Francesca returned to the room as the duchess was still standing in the attitude described. She was on the point of giving her answer respecting the errand on which she had been sent, but remained in speechless astonishment at the sight before her, thinking that the moody humours of her mistress had at length culminated in unmistakable insanity. Presently, the duchess turned towards Francesca, and said, after a moment of reflection,

"Ah! the man! the messenger to my lord's . . . friends in Casa Canacci? Has he returned?"

"He has not, so please your excellency."

"Well, so far! Is my lord yet stirring?"

"He is, my lady. Luigi has just come from his chamber. And, so please your ladyship, he says my lord is asking for his linen."

"Well again! My lord shall be punctually served. Collar and sleeves, ruffles and wristbands, Holland linen and Flanders lace are all

ready. Go thou, Francesca, and bring hither the silver basket to lay them in."

The silver basket or dish, or large basin rather, which the duchess sent for, was a beautifully chiselled piece of plate, the work of a former century, much prized by several generations of the Salviati, and frequently used by the Lady Veronica for its present purpose.

"Am I not punctual," she muttered, as once more left alone, she proceeded to take the fine linen and rich laces from their repository—"am I not punctual in each point of a good wife's duty? Lie lightly, snowy folds, and keep the secret of my New Year's offering, till Jacopo Salviati's own hand shall unveil the gift Veronica Cybo sends him!"

"Put the basin there, Francesca," she continued to the girl, who entered bringing it; "and go thou and bid Luigi ask if it be my lord's pleasure that I send his things forthwith."

Francesca again left the room more mystified than ever by the strangeness of her mistress's manner, and by the unnecessary message she was bidden to carry. Had she not already told the duchess that my lord was waiting to complete his toilette? She met Luigi returning from his second mission to ascertain if Tonino could be seen coming up the hill on his return from Casa Canacci.

"I wish," said he, "that rogue Tonino would make better speed when he is sent to the city. If he don't mind what he is about, he will get dog's allowance from my lord when he does come. I never saw his excellency in such an impatience!"

"Ay!" returned Francesca, "one can understand his impatience for an answer from his innamorata; but what can one make of my mistress? She seems as anxious about Tonino's return as he is!"

"Why upon earth did you tell her anything about his going? Ah! women's tongues!"

"I never told her anything! What do you take me for? Do you think I don't know my place better than that?"

"How in the name of wonder did she find it out, then?"

"The saints only know how she found it out! But, I'll tell you what, Signor Luigi, I do believe that my lady is not in her right mind. You mark my words. The duchess will go mad one of these blessed days, if she is not mad at this moment, as I believe she is. I don't believe she has been in bed all night. She has not dressed for court, and no signs of her going to do it. Then she is all in black this morning, of all the days of the year! And now she has sent me to ask if my lord is ready for his linen. I have told her once that he is waiting for it!"

"Then go back to her ladyship, and tell her so again," rejoined Luigi. "Her excellency may go to Bonifazio,\* instead of going to court, if she thinks proper. But ~~we~~ must not be late at the Pitti this morning. Run along, Cecchina

\* The Florentine Bethlehem Hospital.

nia, there is a good girl, and let us have the things directly! There is no Tonino to be seen. And I must get my master dressed and off to court without his answer from la bella Caterina."

Francesca returned to her mistress, and on entering her chamber found the linen and the lace for the duke's toilet all ready, and daintily laid out in the silver basin.

"So please your ladyship, my lord is waiting for his things."

"And I am waiting to send them to him. See, Francesca, my child, all is ready prepared. Take the basin carefully, my girl. Bear it in both hands; thou wilt find it heavy. There is beneath the linen, a surprise for my lord, a New Year's present from his loving wife. Bear the basin deftly, girl. Nay, I will myself open the door for thee, and see thee safe to the door of my lord's chamber."

Francesco lifted the heavy basin—so heavy as to set her marvelling greatly what the present could be which her strange and incomprehensible mistress had taken this odd method of conveying to her husband. Not jewellery, certainly. Simple cash? Solid dollars might, indeed, make the weight which puzzled her. But it seemed hardly likely that the Lady Veronica could make a present of vulgar dollars to the duke. Perfumes?—some huge flask of essence, or some precious casket of unguent, the produce of the lady's chemistry and still-room industry? Ay! that seemed more likely.

"God send," thought Francesca to herself, as this explanation of the mystery occurred to her, "that my lady's chemistry be lawful, and her drugs wholesome. Were I Duke Jacopo, knowing all I know, I would none of any confection of hers."

So the basin, with the fair linen and the rich lace lying innocently and lightly on its surface, was borne in a sort of procession through the doors and passages between the lady's chamber and that occupied by the duke: the duchess holding wide the doors for her maid to pass, and escorting her on her way. Had she not adopted this precaution, it might have been safely predicted that Francesca's curiosity would have prompted her to examine her mysterious burden on the road, before bringing it to its destination.

Arrived at the door of the duke's chamber, the duchess tapped, and on being bidden by the voice of Luigi to enter, she so threw it open as to allow Francesca to pass without being seen herself. The door fell back into its place, leaving the duchess, pale as death, breathlessly listening on the outside of it.

"A prosperous and happy New Year, and many of them, to your excellency!" said Francesca, as she entered; "I have brought your lordship's linen, and my lady bids me say that she has sent your excellency a New Year's gift at the bottom of the basin. What it may be, my lord, I know not, seeing that my lady herself placed the things as your lordship sees them, but 'tis something heavy to carry."

"Thanks, my pretty Francesca, there's a fee for

thy good wishes not so heavy to carry back," said Salviati, taking the pretty Abigail by the chin and giving her a kiss on the cheek. "But stay—something a little heavier must go with it this New Year's morning. There's for thy good wishes," putting a gold piece into her hand; "now run and give my thanks and compliments to the duchess, and tell her we shall meet presently at court."

And thus in lightsome mood the duke proceeded to complete his toilette.

First, on the top of the basin, lay lightly the large laced ruffles for his wristbands. These he lifted carefully, and started with a surprised and angry frown on seeing beneath them the voluminous and exquisitely fine muslin intended for his neck, stained with a large red spot on its snowy folds just in the centre of the basin.

"Ha! what's this? some ill-timed jest!" he cried. "Luigi, here, lift me this loathly cloth. What have we of the Lady Veronica's sending beneath it?"

He spoke, his cheeks and lips growing pale with an unreasoned and undefined misgiving. Luigi, too, hesitated and turned pale as he put his hand to the blood-stained linen. After a moment's pause, he lifted it from the basin with a sudden twitch.

There, in the bottom of the basket, lay the head of Caterina Canacci. That lovely face, every smiling lineament of which had even at that moment been present to her lover's picturing fancy, so awfully the same, so awfully not the same!

It is on record that from that dreadful hour Jacopo Salviati never smiled again—never more had any part in the pleasure or the business of the world around him—and died a broken-hearted prematurely aged wreck of man, while by count of years he should yet have been in the prime and flower of his life.

#### CHAPTER VIII. THE MAJESTY OF THE LAW.

THE chronicle of the wrongs of Veronica, Duchess of Salviati, and of her memorable vengeance, has been completed, and there is little more to be told to complete this specimen of the Italian life of the seventeenth century. Yet, inasmuch as not even in Florence, under Ferdinand the Second, could such a series of facts pass wholly without external consequences, it is worth while to add another feature to the social picture, by briefly telling what those consequences were.

The Via dei Pilastri, it will be remembered, was quite quiet in its total darkness, when the assassins escaped after the perpetration of the deed. Some alarm, indeed, seems to have been given, perhaps by the people of the house into which Serselli and Carlini escaped. But the police, as was then and there invariably the case, arrived when the malefactors were clear off from the scene of their crime. Shortly after their escape, "la Corte," as the chief police-officer and his men were strangely called, came with lights and bustling noise up the Via dei Pilastri—

always with abundance of light and noise—to give due premonitory notice of their approach.

Bartolommeo Canacci, it will be remembered, had been left in the fatal house paralysed by terror and imbecility, and almost in a state of deliquium. As soon, however, as the assassins had departed, carrying away with them the most frightful of the evidences of their crime, and the house remained in dead stillness, with the exception of the helpless wailing, which from time to time came from the chamber of old Giustino, Bartolommeo's excess of terror had subsided. As soon as he ascertained that in truth he and his bedridden old father were the only living beings remaining in the house, thoughts of turning the occasion to his own advantage began to arise in his mind. And when the officers of justice entered, he was found rifling the coffers in the old man's chamber, heedless of his mingled entreaties and imprecations.

It was a matter of course, according to the traditions of the Florentine police, that both these, the evidently helpless father, as well as the presumptively guilty son, should be arrested. Nor did the zeal of the "Bargello"\* and his officers cease there in a matter the scandal of which was the talk of every tongue, gentle and simple, in Florence. Several other relatives of the unfortunate family, with their wives and families, some of them resident in villas at a distance from Florence, were arrested and lodged in the Bargello. Of course nobody, official or unofficial, had the slightest idea that these unhappy people were in any way guilty of the horrible crime, but it was desirable that something should be done, and some activity manifested. And although the real authoress of the crime, and the motive of it, were well known, it was especially necessary that "Justice" should not presume to lay her hand on personages placed so far above her. It was necessary, also, or at least decent and desirable, that, although in fact the truth of the matter was no mystery, the city and the authorities should pretend to know something very different. One "procès-verbal" accordingly was drawn up containing a true account of the facts of the case as far as they could be known; and a second fictitious one, in which nothing was suffered to appear derogatory in any way to "persons of condition." The first document was sedulously locked away from the light of day among the secret archives of the court, in company with much else which it was fondly hoped would never be exposed to the public eye. The second was given to the world as the result of the most accurate investigation that justice could make into the history of so monstrous an enormity.

The depositions of the Signori Carlini and Serselli were also taken. They related what they had seen in the Casa Canacci, and after-

\* The chief of the Florentine police, as well as the prison over which he presided, was so called.

wards from the window of the adjoining house. Of course their evidence criminated no one on whom the police could lay hands except the wretched Bartolommeo. It was proved that the assassins who had entered the house had obtained access to it by his means, and had come in in his company. In a short time—as it seems to have appeared to the Florentine public of that day: that is to say, in a few months—the unfortunate old man was allowed to return to his own bed to die, and the other manifestly innocent members of the family were liberated. But Bartolommeo, and a brother of his, who appears to have had nothing whatever to do in the matter from first to last, were tortured. And the agony of the rack soon forced from Bartolommeo a complete confession of the whole circumstances of the conspiracy and the crime. This confession, of course, could not be suffered to reach the public. But it sufficed to furnish the majesty of the law with the victim which was needed for its decorum, and for the finishing of the affair with a proper and satisfactory coup de théâtre.

Bartolommeo was, to a certain extent, guilty. Possibly he was not altogether the dupe of the story the duchess had told him, as to the scope of her vengeance. At all events, he was guilty of being caught in the act of rifling his father's coffers. And the majesty of the law accordingly took his life with a very tranquil conscience. On the 27th of November, 1639, he was beheaded in that blood-saturated old court-yard of the Bargello, nearly a year after the committal of the crime.

Many prayers, and the intercession of powerful mediators, were employed to induce Salviati to pardon and become reconciled to the Lady Veronica. But they were all in vain. Reiterated supplications from the duchess reached him. Strong remonstrances were addressed to him by the Prince Carlo, her father, by the cardinals of the family—Alderano and Odorpo—by Ricciarda Gonzaga, and by other connexions. Many of the ruling sovereigns of Italy endeavoured to influence him. Even the pontiff, Innocent the Eleventh, used his authority in favour of so highly connected a murderess. But Salviati was inflexible in his determination never again to see the woman whose ruthless deed had desolated his life and heart. He never did see her again after that fatal New Year's morning. He died, unforgiving and broken-hearted.

The lot of the Duchess Veronica was a different one. She lived to a great age, residing chiefly at Massa. She became (as might have been foreseen) exemplarily religious in her life; and at her death was deemed little less than a canonised saint by all the population of the small territory of her family.

Early in December will be published  
**THE EXTRA DOUBLE NUMBER  
FOR CHRISTMAS.**

Price Fourpence.

*The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND is reserved by the Authors.*